



Town of Narrows

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Acknowledgments

Town Council

Tom Spangler, Mayor
Joe Goorskey, Vice-Mayor
John Mills, Council Member
R.E. “Bobby” Lucas, Council Member
Sara Bowles, Council Member
George Conley, Council Member

Planning Commission

John Mills, Chairman
Carolyn Kirby, Co- Chairman
John Hale Jr , Member
Dalton Smith, Member
Casey Clark, Member

Town Staff

Terry Nicholson, Town Manager
Cherie Fenne, Office Clerk
John Davis, Public Works Director
Benji Ratcliffe, Police Chief
Chris Reynolds, Police Sergeant
Lindsey Thompson, Utility Billing Clerk and Market Manager

Partners

GILES COUNTY
Chris McKlarney, County Administrator
Kevin Belcher, Public Service Authority Director
Cora Gnegy, Tourism Director
Bryan Reed, GIS/Roads/Subdivision Agent

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Michael W. Gray, District Planning Manager
Jesse H. Miller, P.E, Assistant Resident Engineer

FIRE DEPARTMENT
Elwood Lambert, Fire Chief

LIBRARY
Cindy Laws, Librarian



Plan Preparation and Technical Assistance provided by:

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Kevin R. Byrd, AICP, Executive Director
Elijah Sharp, Deputy Executive Director
Aphi Fancon, AICP, Director of Community Development
Jennifer Wilsie, AICP, Director of Housing
Christy Straight, AICP, Director of Environmental Resources
Kathleen Armstrong, Regional Planner II/Community Designer
Hannah Schelthoff, PhD, Regional Cartographer/Geospatial Analyst

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Chapter 1: Introduction.....PAGE 2

Chapter 2: Community Engagement..... PAGE 11

Chapter 3: Future Land Use..... PAGE 19

Chapter 4: Economic Development..... PAGE 31

Chapter 5: Housing..... PAGE 41

Chapter 6: Transportation..... PAGE 49

Chapter 7: Infrastructure and Public Services..... PAGE 59

Chapter 8: Natural, Historic, Cultural + Recreational Resources..... PAGE 69

1. Introduction

The comprehensive plan is the Town’s vision for the future. It is a policy document that provides direction and guides decision making while incorporating the values of the community to make the Town of Narrows a vibrant and thriving community. The plan is general and long term in nature. It considers the physical, social, economic and environmental factors to drive the future direction of the Town.

The authority under which this plan has been prepared is contained in Title 15.2, Chapter 22, Article 3 (§15.2-2223, et seq) of the Code of Virginia. According to the Virginia Code a comprehensive plan is a plan for the physical development of the territory within a locality’s jurisdiction. Localities are vested with powers to plan for the future development of the community and since 1980 each Virginia locality has been required to have a comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Plan is required to be reviewed by the local planning commission at least once every five years from the date of adoption.

For the preparation, the Code of Virginia states that the Planning Commission shall make careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of existing conditions, trends of growth and requirements of the town for the probable future. The planning commission is required to consult the public for input prior to recommendation of the comprehensive plan.

The comprehensive plan consists of key elements such as land use, economic development, transportation, housing, infrastructure, natural environment, and community services. Some of the elements such as land use, transportation and housing are required per Virginia Code while others such as economic development, community facilities and cultural elements are per community preferences. The comprehensive plan is intended to be a living document so periodic review and amendments are important to reflect current community changes.

Planning Process

The comprehensive plan process included identifying needs, community values and initiatives, establishing a vision for the future, developing goals, objective and policies to achieve that vision, and enhance the quality of life of the community. The process was conducted in the following four phases:



Existing Plans and Documents

Plans and studies previously prepared were reviewed and policies recommendations from these plans that remain relevant were incorporated into the new comprehensive plan. Some of these documents are as follows:

- Downtown Revitalization Master Plan
- Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Regional Housing Study
- Recreation Economy for Rural Communities, Giles County, Virginia, 2020
- 2035 NRV Rural Long-Range Transportation Plan
- River Center Action Plan

Implementation

The success of the comprehensive plan depends on the steps taken to implement it. The plan is implemented through the zoning ordinance, subdivision ordinance, capital improvement projects and community programs. Decisions regarding new developments, provision of infrastructure, or developing annual work programs should be consistent with the comprehensive plan.



Our Town History

Narrows was settled around 1778, some thirty years after the first migrants from Pennsylvania arrived in Giles County, via the Great Wagon Trail along the New River. Narrows' founding families, the French, McKenney, Hale and Hare families, all settled near the confluence of Wolf Creek and the New River to take advantage of its strategic position during the river transportation era. A mill was also constructed on Dry Branch (in the present day Mill Creek Nature Park) in the late 1780's and a portion of it still exists in the present-day dam. Most of the area of southern Narrows (the northern and southern portions of Town are bisected by the New River) was originally owned by the Hale family, perhaps the most prominent of the founding families. Original land grants to the Hale family, dating as far back as 1793, are still in the possession of the family.

The Cumberland Gap Turnpike was chartered in 1834 and built during the period 1838 to 1843. Connecting with the Great Wagon Road in Botetourt County, this new road brought large numbers of settlers through western Virginia seeking land on the frontier. Some of those settlers stopped in Giles County and the Narrows area. Main Street and Route 61, heading southwest along Wolf Creek, follow the approximate original path of the Cumberland Gap Turnpike through Town. Because of its location along the Turnpike, the village expanded its offerings to include transportation-related services.

During the Civil War period, Narrows was considered a highly strategic location due to its proximity to one of the most important water gaps and transportation routes through the Alleghany Mountains. Confederate troops were stationed on Tannery Hill, which afforded them a vantage point in three directions.

Following the war, Narrows began to flourish. In 1873, the community's first U.S. Post Office opened, serving as a vital communication link between Dublin and White Sulphur Springs. During that time, consideration was given to changing the name of the town's post office to "Intermont". However, this proposal was quickly rejected for two reasons; first, the developing township would also have to assimilate the name; and secondly, another Virginia community already held prior claim to the name. In 1890, Narrows' first church was established. It was Methodist, although all faiths worshiped there until a new church was built in 1922 on Main Street to accommodate the rapid growth of the Town.

The economic boom of the Reconstruction Era provided Narrows with a greater ability to serve its citizenry. In the field of public safety, for example, fire protection was furnished by the Union Tanning Company. The Union Tanning Company was the largest local employer of that time and the most capable of providing the required manpower for firefighting. After the Town's water company was organized in the early 1920's, the Town assumed the responsibility of firefighting. Although portable hose reels were still purchased from the tannery, small fire houses were constructed in key points in Narrows and the first volunteer fire company was formed to use the newly installed equipment. During the 1930's, the Town's first fire truck was purchased and the Chief of Police was also placed in charge of fire services.

Coupled with the provision of fire safety service, Narrows recognized the need to protect the "public interest and welfare" through excellence in the body politic. For example, the Town Charter, which was granted by the General Assembly on March 14, 1904, was amended in 1948 to provide for its first Town Manager.

Since that time, development standards such as zoning and subdivision ordinances have been adopted. Furthering the need to safeguard the public interest, a local planning commission was organized to regulate escalating development concerns.

Giles County and Narrows both experienced growth when the Norfolk and Western railway was constructed during 1884 and 1885. Giles County's population, for instance, increased by nearly 50 percent. It went from 5,870 in 1880-1881 to 8,794 in 1884-1885. As with any transportation center, industrial growth was soon to follow.

In 1880 and 1881, before the arrival of the railroad in Narrows, the only businesses in town were a flour mill, one doctor's office, and a general merchant. After the railroad connection in the mid-1880's, two saw mills were erected. Soon after, in 1910, a third mill located on Walkers Creek was purchased by two Narrows residents, Herbert Hale and George Bane. The men moved the mill to Wolf Creek. The mill provided electricity for the Town's lights between 1915 and 1916.

The first municipal building was constructed in Narrows in 1921. It was a two-story, concrete block structure that stood where the present parking lot is now located. The present brick municipal building was erected in 1950.

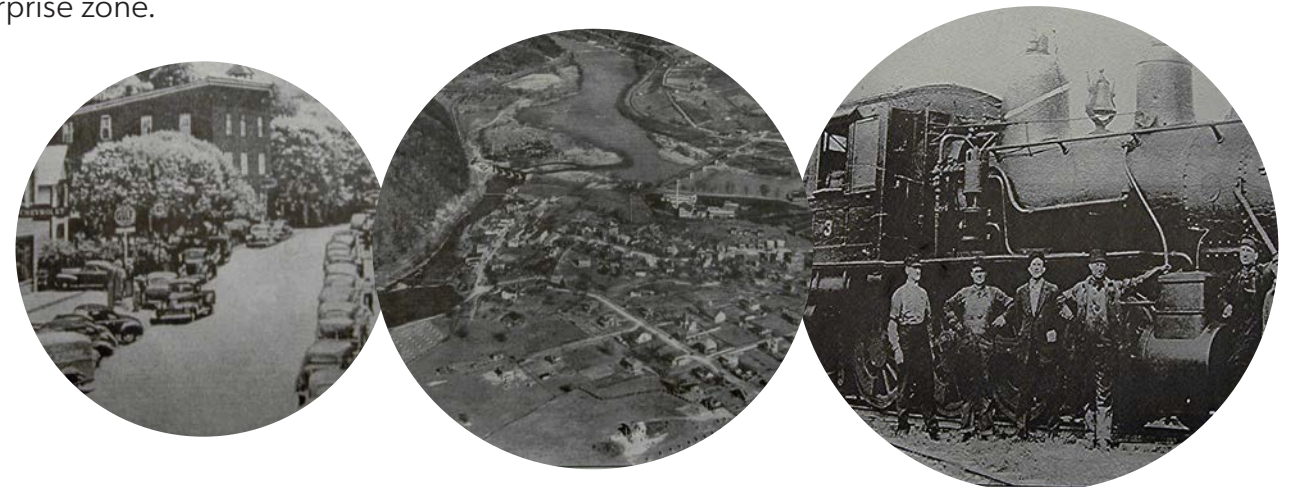
The first bank to open in Narrows was the First State Bank of Narrows, which opened its doors on September 19, 1905. Prior to the bank's opening, Narrows residents had to travel to Pearisburg, the County seat, to conduct their banking business.

The first one-room public school in Narrows was instituted in 1872 by Benton Hobbs. In the mid 1880s, the school took over the old Methodist Church building on Monroe Street and built a second story. In 1908, a new building made of concrete blocks was constructed on a hill overlooking the town between Hill and College Streets. It included the first high school. A brick building was erected around 1925 adjacent to the block building.

A new Narrows High School was built on Monroe Street in 1931, serving until the present high school was built in 1961. The brick building on the hill remained an elementary school until it burned on Christmas Day in 1941. The fire forced some of the grades into temporary quarters until the present elementary school was completed in 1949 on land purchased from the Dr. Coburn family.

Prior to the construction of U.S. Route 460 sixty years ago, U.S. Route 100 served as the primary road to West Virginia. Route 100 ran through the downtown area in a curved fashion, giving vehicle occupants many different views of the town and surrounding topography.

Unfortunately, when U.S. Route 460 was constructed, it significantly reduced the traffic flow in the downtown area, thus greatly impacting the retail and service sector in the central business district. As a result, very little in the downtown landscape changed until the mid-1990's and with the creation of an enterprise zone.



Demographic Profile

Census data shows that the Town of Narrows’ population had the highest population increase between 1940 and 1950 with growth of more than 69%. Population grew from 1489 in 1940 to 2520 in 1950. After 2010, the population data indicates a decreasing trend with the count of 2,617 in 2010 to 2,099 in 2021, a 20% decrease. According to the data from 2010 to 2021, a yearly decline of approximately 1.8% can be observed. The average number of persons per household in Narrows is 2.4 persons according to 2020 US Census data.

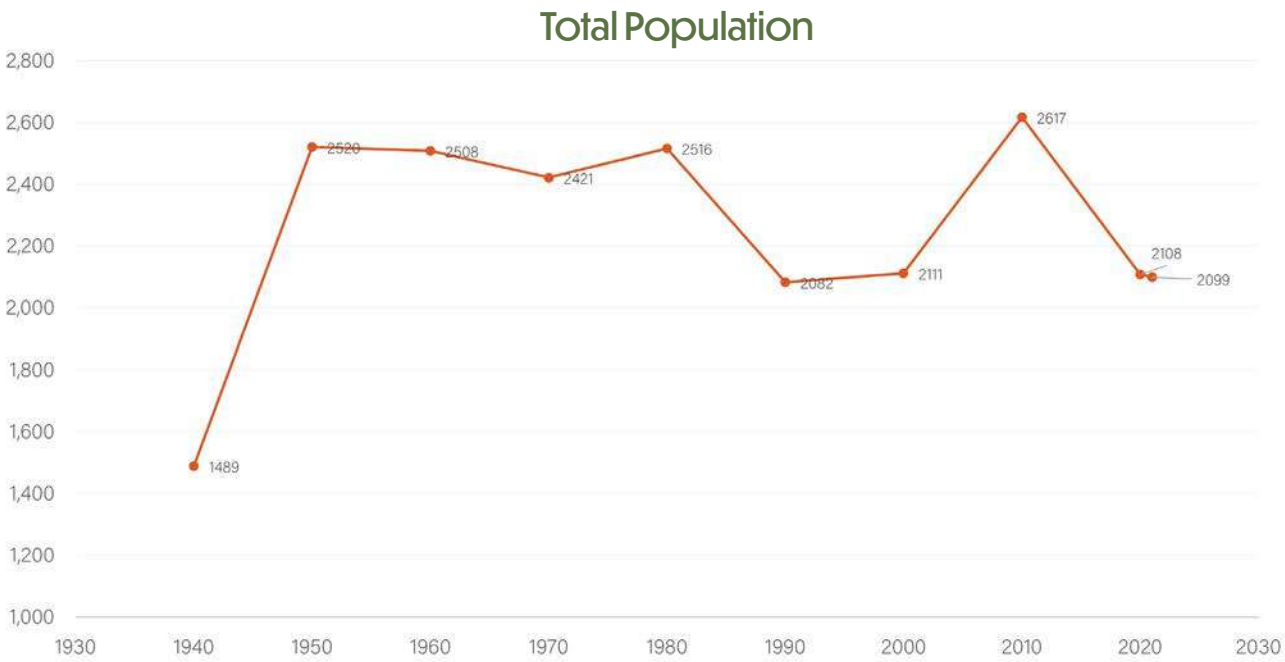


Fig. 1.1 Decennial Population Source: US Census

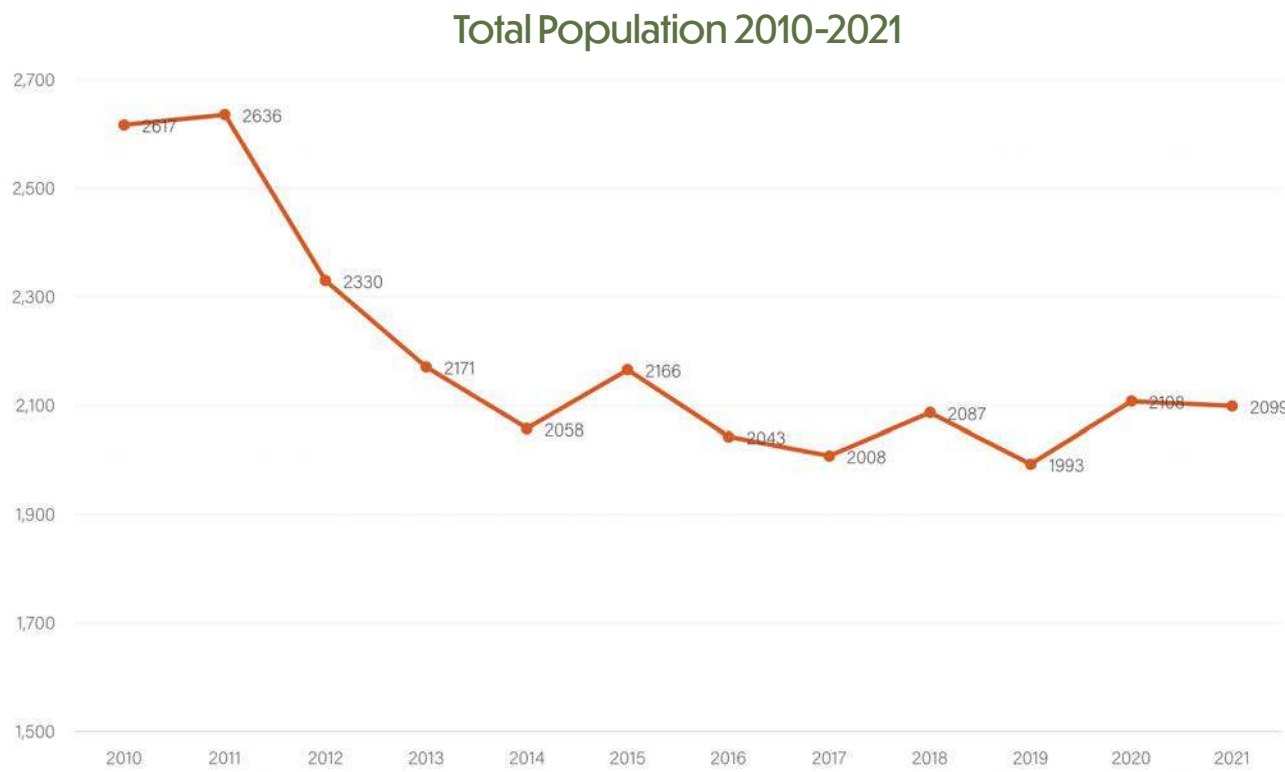


Fig 1.2 Population Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

The number of male population in Narrows in 2021 was 1095 and female population was 1004. In the last 10 years the number of females has decreased by almost 300 while male population has decreased by 144.

Population by Gender

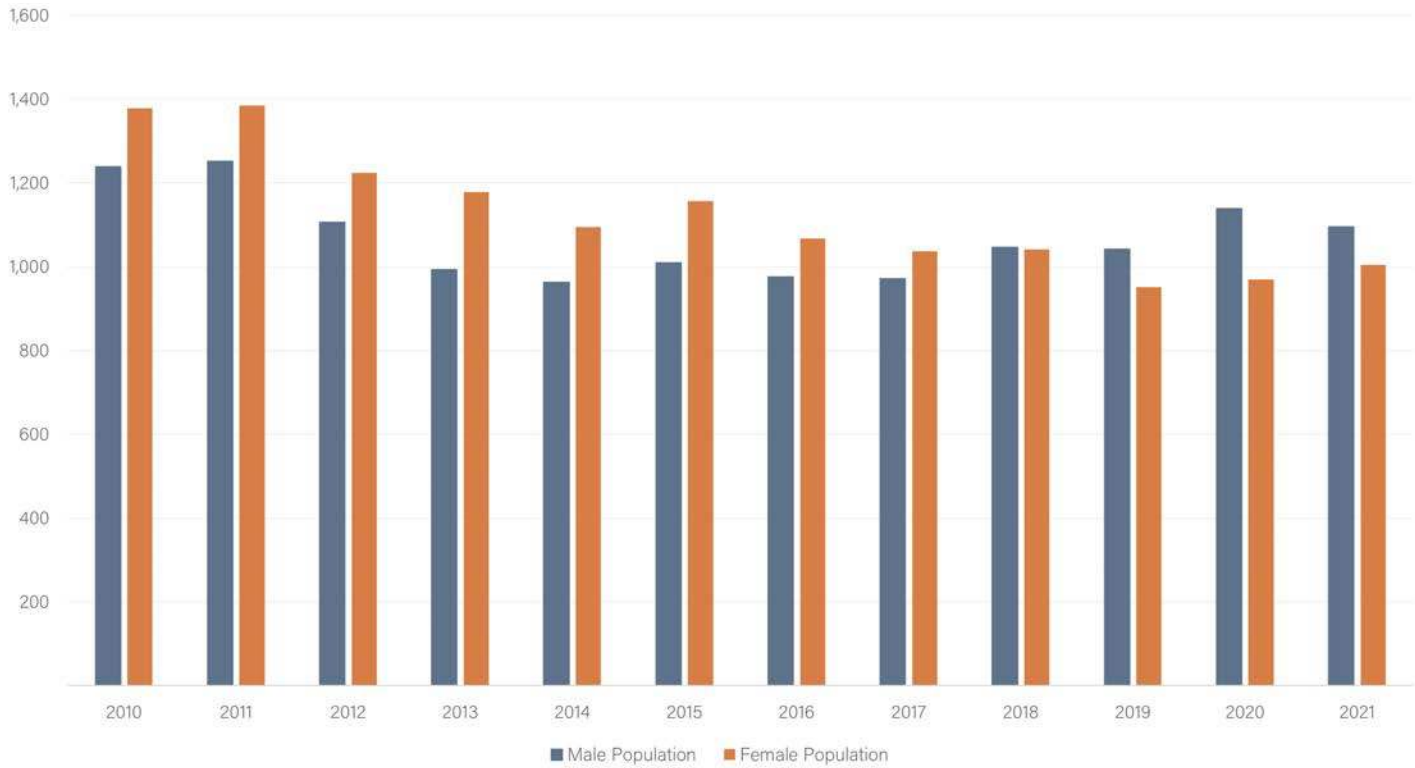


Fig 1.3 Population by Gender Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Median Age

The median age in the Town of Narrows was 35.4 years in 2020, where they were 44.7 years and 38.8 years in Giles County and State of Virginia respectively in the same year. This indicates that the population is relatively younger than the County or the state.

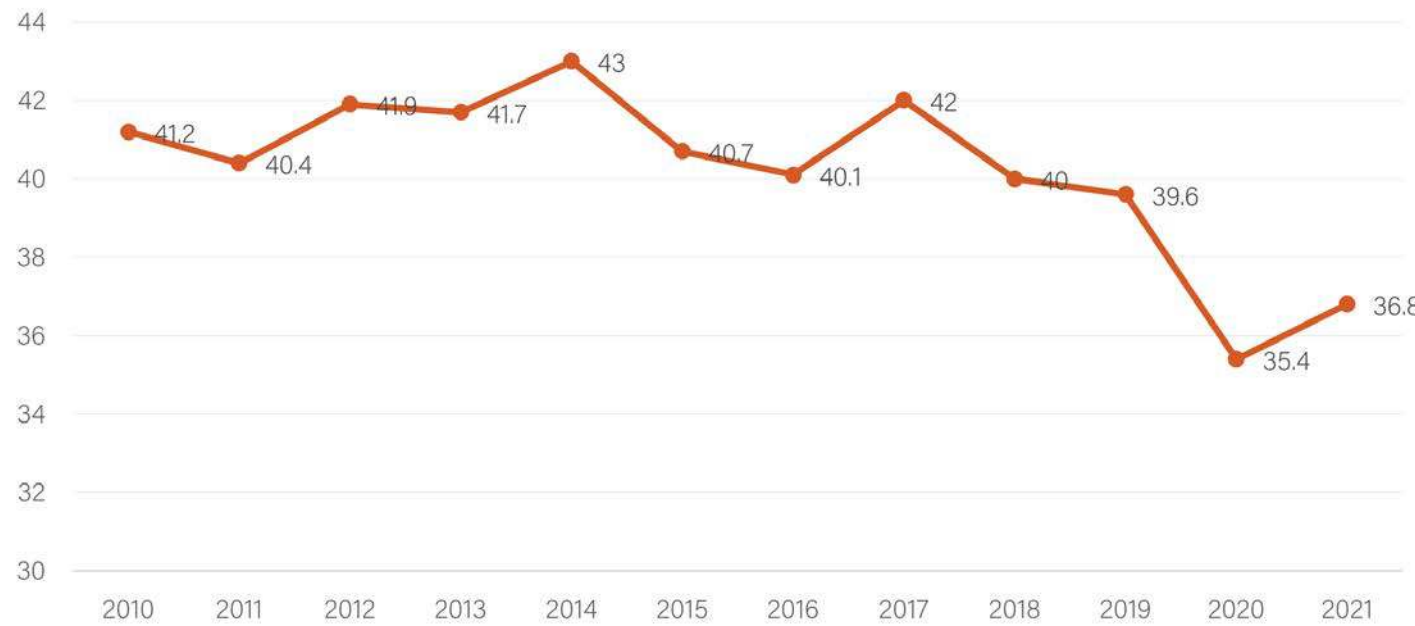


Fig 1.4 Median Age Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Age Groups

The age distribution data shows that the 5 to 9 years age group had the highest population in 2021 compared to other age groups. The 60 and above age group accounts for 428 people which is approximately 17.5 percent of the total population. This age group appears to have decreased by 22% since 2010 which signifies that the community is shifting towards a younger population.

Age	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Under 5 years	128	150	168	157	116	151	148	132	135	107	159	169
5 to 9 years	134	146	94	47	69	91	100	108	161	184	371	337
10 to 14 years	231	216	217	200	198	171	152	118	94	72	55	40
15 to 19 years	147	161	108	127	98	73	84	120	120	117	154	131
20 to 24 years	111	101	78	110	107	191	202	195	218	224	126	126
25 to 34 years	365	367	248	220	193	179	161	170	180	182	185	217
35 to 44 years	401	403	386	329	315	330	306	272	295	273	225	214
45 to 54 years	410	385	313	345	370	321	319	320	290	260	238	229
55 to 59 years	109	109	108	84	93	124	88	84	99	95	191	208
60 to 64 years	157	150	167	91	110	106	74	72	124	125	107	155
65 to 74 years	258	238	282	301	225	246	228	200	172	179	139	133
75 to 84 years	103	136	118	123	149	164	152	170	135	100	81	78
85 years and over	63	74	43	37	15	19	29	47	64	75	77	62

Table 1.1 Age Groups by Count Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Age	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Under 5 years	128	150	168	157	116	151	148	132	135	107	159	169
5 to 9 years	134	146	94	47	69	91	100	108	161	184	371	337
10 to 14 years	231	216	217	200	198	171	152	118	94	72	55	40
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Table 1.2 Age Groups by Percentages Source: American Community Survey (ACS)





COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

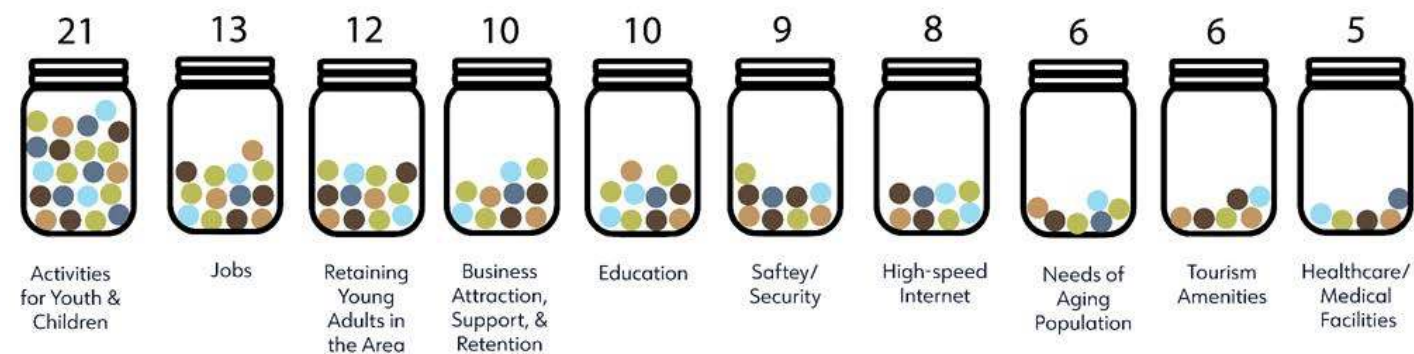
2. Community Engagement

The Town desired to develop a fresh vision for its future in the preparation of the new comprehensive plan. To shape this vision, the Town wanted to hear from all sections of the community – residents from all age groups, business owners, visitors, workers and other stakeholders.

The Town formulated some creative ways to encourage the community and stakeholders to share their thoughts and ideas. Interactive sessions with the public were held at different community events. Two focus group meetings were held to engage directly with key stakeholders and experts in the field. One-on-one interviews sessions with representatives from organizations and Town staff were also held. A community survey was conducted which was available online and as traditional paper questionnaire. The community online survey was advertised at different locations and the paper survey was distributed at various venues. In the final stages of developing the comprehensive plan the Town shared the draft goals, objectives and policies with the public by hosting two open house meetings to receive feedback of the recommendations.

Community Event Feedback

The feedback received from the community events revealed that local residents desire more activities for the youth, job growth and retaining young people in the area. For the survey question where residents and visitors were asked of their favorite places to visit in the Town of Narrows, a majority shared that the choices were the Duck Pond, Camp Success, Mill Creek Park, New River and Farmers Market.



What would make the Town better? (choose four.)

Focus Group Meetings

Some of the key issues that were identified at the focus group meetings are as follows:

- Need for Broadband and broadband expansion
- Aging population
- Youth retention
- Ensure viability of existing businesses and industry
- Creation of Business Association
- Business to Business networking organization or effort
- Hire “Main Street” Coordinator to assist and recruit new businesses and help with marketing all businesses
- Ensure a multi-aspect business development approach
- Assistance opportunities for future business owners
- Simplified path to small business openings
- Aging public facilities, and water and sewer infrastructure

Where do you visit most in the Town of Narrows?

Fig 2.1



Focus Group Meetings

At the focus group meetings, a list of opportunities, priorities and recommendations were identified that was categories in seven core areas:

- 1. Small Business Support
- 2. Business Opportunities
- 3. Workforce and Education
- 4. Municipal Policy
- 5. Outdoor Recreation
- 6. Quality of Life
- 7. Strategic Collaboration

Community Survey



TOWN OF NARROWS

Community Engagement Summary

- Site Visits: **176**
- Survey Participants: **64 (+16** paper surveys)
- 59% of respondents live in Narrows and 36% live in Giles County
- 42.9% of Survey respondents have called the Town of Narrows “home” for 20+ years, while 61.1% have lived in Giles County for 20+ years.
- 83.7% own their own home

Survey Respondents identified the following as assets of the Town:

- 1. Sense of community
- 2. Rural character
- 3. Safety and security
- 4. High quality schools

Quality of services in the Town:

- Most satisfied with the Road maintenance, emergency services and recreation
- Most dissatisfied with the Internet connectivity, community events for youth, and infrastructure (water and sewer)

What could make the Town better:

- 1. Business attraction, support and retention
- 2. Retaining young adults
- 3. Jobs / youth activities / tourism amenities (tied)

Business types that respondents would like to see more of:

- 1. Restaurants
- 2. Medical, health, wellness
- 3. Personal services
- 4. Pharmacies

Type of Restaurant:

- 1. Casual Dining (not fast food)
- 2. Coffee Shops

Type of housing to be built:

- 1. Larger single-family homes (3+ bedrooms)
- 2. Smaller single-family homes (<3 bedrooms)
- 3. Independent senior living

Type of Land Use development the Town should promote:

- 1. Town Parks
- 2. Single family homes
- 3. Pedestrian facilities

Recreation types that respondents participate in:

- 1. Walking/ Hiking
- 2. Fishing
- 3. Camping
- 4. Would like to see fishing opportunities

improve at:

- Wolf Creek
- Camp Success Park

Recreation areas used the most:

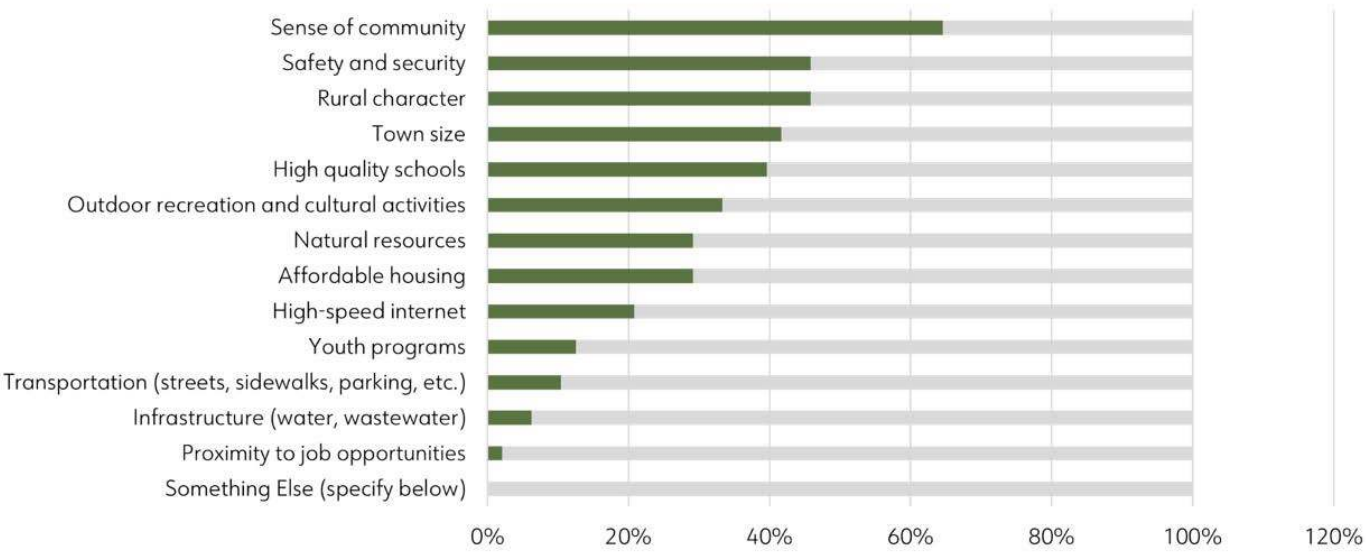
- 1. Narrows Town Park
- 2. New River
- 3. Duck Pond

Amenities needed the most:

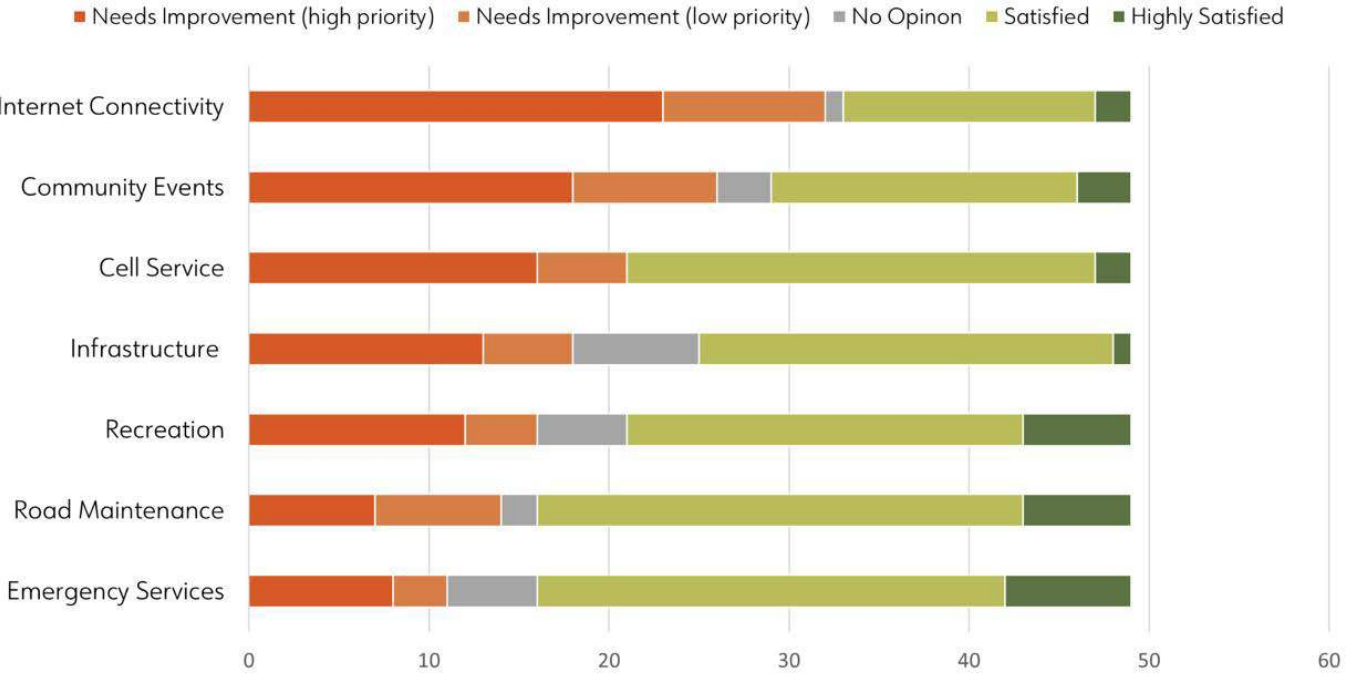
- 1. Park equipment
- 2. Toilets
- 3. Picnic area

Survey Questions

Percent of Participants Who Listed Each Asset in Their Top 4



Satisfaction with Current Services



Open House

Two open houses were held at the Farmers Market to gather input on the draft policy document. The meeting was advertised in the local newspaper and on the Town Facebook page. Some of the comments received at the two open house meetings were:

- Dredge sediments from the pond
- Need more youth programs
- Add bike sharrow or share road sign on Wolf Creek Road and Lurich Road





FUTURE LAND USE

3. Future Land Use

Background

The goal of this element is to guide development patterns within the town to enhance economic vitality and quality of life and achieve a desirable living environment for current and future residents. Future land use is the designated future use or reuse of land. The Town guides land use development pattern through preparation and implementation of future land use policies and future land use map. The distribution, location, and extent of the various categories of land use is shown in the future land use map.

Topography

The aesthetic and physical characteristics of Narrows are shaped by its topographical location. Narrows is situated along both banks of the New River, just upstream from the historic “Narrows” point at which the river cuts through the ridges of East River Mountain and Peters Mountain. A significant portion of the southern section of Town, including its downtown section, lies within the Wolf Creek watershed, a tributary of the New River. The northern section of Narrows is located on relatively shallow land at the base of Peters Mountain. A relatively steep escarpment separates the floodplain along the New River from the residential areas near the north banks.

Elevations within the Town vary from approximately 1,520 feet above sea level along the banks of the New River, to a high point of 1,920 feet at the southernmost Town limit. The central business district’s elevation is approximately 1,540 feet, with adjacent land rising to the east and south. The plateau area, north of the river, is slightly higher at 1,700 feet. The surrounding mountains have elevations ranging from 2,869 feet (Piney Ridge), 3,200 feet (East River), and 3,359 feet (Peters), to 3,667 feet (Wolf Creek).

Soils

Seventeen different soil types are found within the Town limits of Narrows. Soil information is an important component in determining the development potential of any given tract of land. Some soils are suitable for a wide range of development, including large commercial and industrial buildings. Others may be able to support only small structures, such as single-family dwellings. Still other soils may have qualities which severely restrict any infrastructure improvements. A soils map and description of soil type is included in the Appendix.

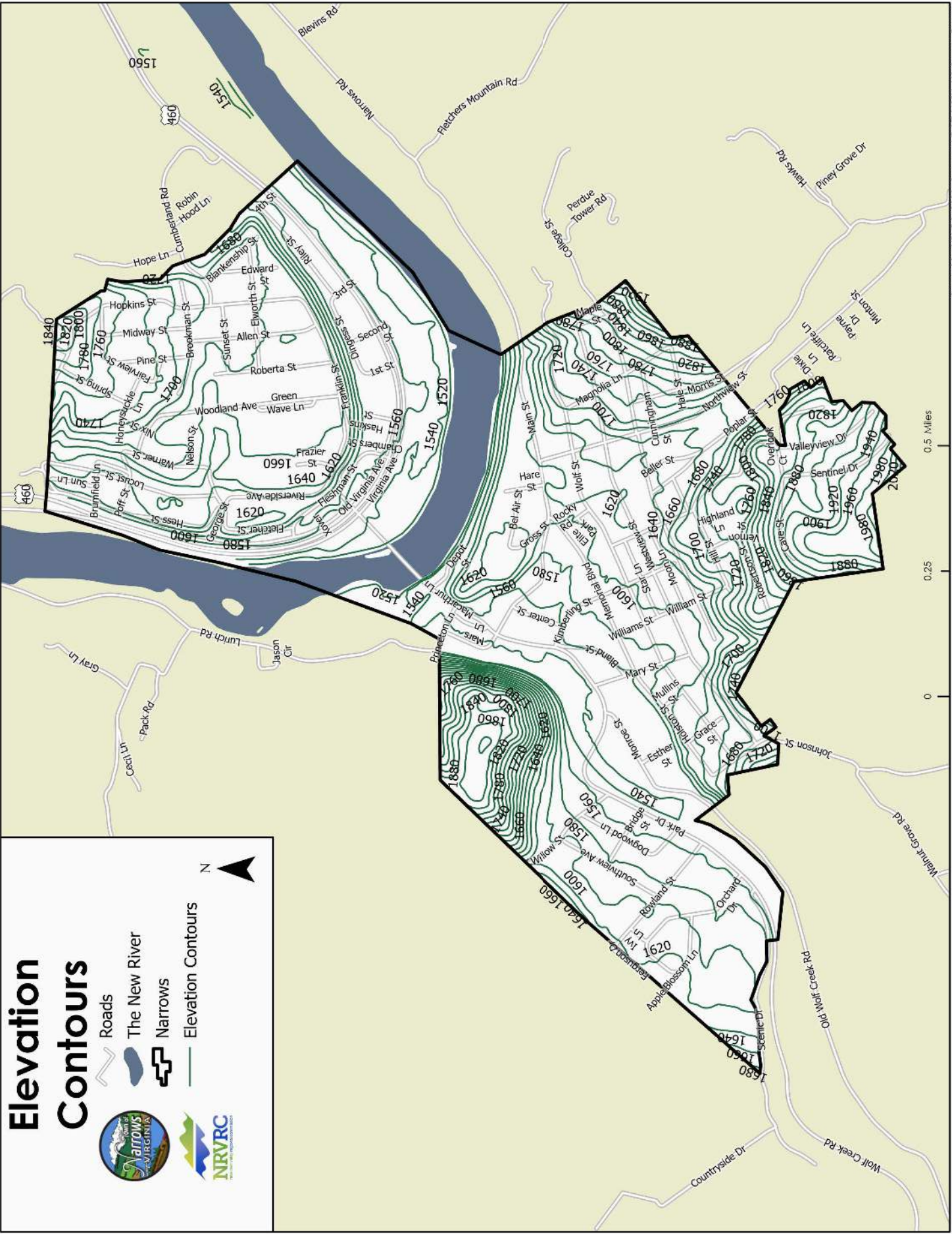
Climate

The climate of Giles County is classified as humid continental and is characterized by moderately mild winters and warm summers. The annual average temperature at Glen Lyn (approximately four miles by air from Narrows and at a similar elevation) is 67.7° F, with a January average of 46.2° F and a July average of 86.9° F. Precipitation averages 36.56 inches per year, with the majority of it falling during the spring and summer months. Average snowfall is 10 inches per year.

Floodplain

Within the Town of Narrows there are 100-year and 500-year floodplains. The flood map included in the appendix indicates that areas along the New River, Wolf Creek and Mill Creek are within the floodplains. This includes part of the downtown and areas along Monroe Street. Major floods in the Town of Narrows occurred in 1916, 1933, and 1940. The Town is a member of the Flood Insurance Program and complies with the Program’s guidelines related to development in floodplains.

Map 3.1 Elevation Map



Existing Land Use

The Town of Narrows covers an area of approximately 855 acres. The existing land use data was extracted from Giles County’s land use codes which is used to appraise land. The existing land uses were classified into six categories: (1) Single Family Residential (2) Mobile Homes (3) Multi-Family Residential (4) Commercial (5) Industrial; (6) Private/Semi Public and (7) Public/Semi Public Uses. Table 3.1 shows the land use category, number of parcels and acreage for each category.

Existing Land Use

ID	Existing Land Use	No. of Parcels	Acres
1	Single Family Residential	1408	526.55
2	Mobile Homes	10	2.16
3	Multi-Family Residential	4	1.85
4	Commercial	173	74.90
5	Industrial	11	42.04
6	Private/Semi-Public	5	0.42
7	Public/Semi-Public	20	37.90
	Total		685.82

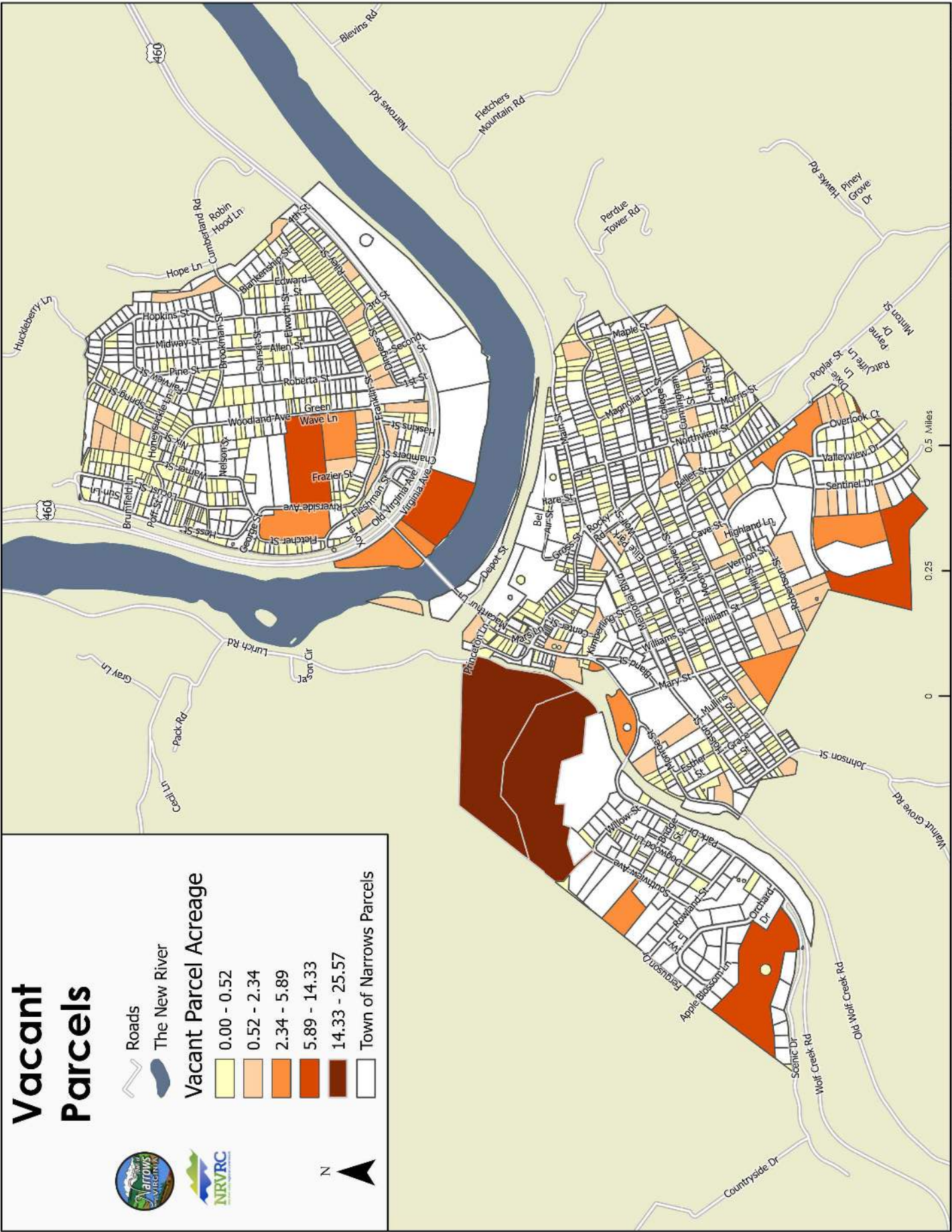
Table 3.1 Existing Land Use

Single family residential uses comprise the largest number of parcels and acreage within the Town of Narrows. Single-Family Housing is the preferred housing type. Mobile homes account for only 2.16 acres and Multi-Family Units account for only 1.85 acres.

Commercial is a significant use in Narrows with about 173 parcels and approximately 75 acres under this use. The data shows that there are 11 parcels under industrial use with a total area of about 42 acres. Institutional and public uses within the Town account for about 40 acres.

The Town has limited vacant land that can accommodate new developments as most of the lands above 3 acres are not suitable for development due to topography. A majority of the vacant parcels that are developable are smaller in size. The Town will need to focus on redevelopment, infill development and reuse of vacant and underutilized buildings.

Map 3.2 Vacant Parcels



In evaluating the Town’s 2016 future land use map there are six (6) designated future land use categories. There are no descriptions of the categories. It was also noted that there are no areas within the Town that are identified as mixed-use category. To maintain the character of some of the areas of the Town, such as the downtown, and to promote revitalization and redevelopment opportunities, there is a need to promote mixed-use development. Mixed-use development integrates different uses such as residential, retail, service and employment. The Future Land use map should identify areas where such development(s) can be located.

The development pattern along US Route 460 is predominantly commercial such as gas stations, retail stores and auto repairs. Some of the buildings along the corridor are vacant and properties are deteriorating due to lack of investment. Prioritizing development of this area and enhancing the aesthetic quality of the corridor will encourage private sector investment.

There is a lack of wayfinding signage on US Route 460 for the Town of Narrows. In order for the Town to establish an appealing image to attract visitors, wayfinding signage needs to be established in proximity to the US Route 460 exit area for Narrows.

The Town of Narrows created a Downtown Master Plan in 2017 and provided a vision for the downtown. The vision was developed with input from citizens, businesses and other stakeholders. Since then, the Town has been working on physical improvements within the downtown to encourage investments and achieve the goals of the plan. The redevelopment initiatives included in the plan are as follows:

- Creekside Park and Trail on Wolf Creek
- Improved Farmers Market
- Façade improvements for blighted buildings
- Future Gateway Entrance Improvements and Signage into downtown
- Future improvements to the Creekside Trail

Community Engagement QUOTES:

- “Revitalizing downtown, renovating vacant buildings for new business opportunities.”
- “Build a green, community friendly anchor business or non profit that would match our identity AND build livelihood - i.e.- a training center, bike race/shop/ manufacturers, software company, brewery or winery, etc.”
- “Downtown needs a facelift and we need to fill empty store front with viable and community oriented businesses”

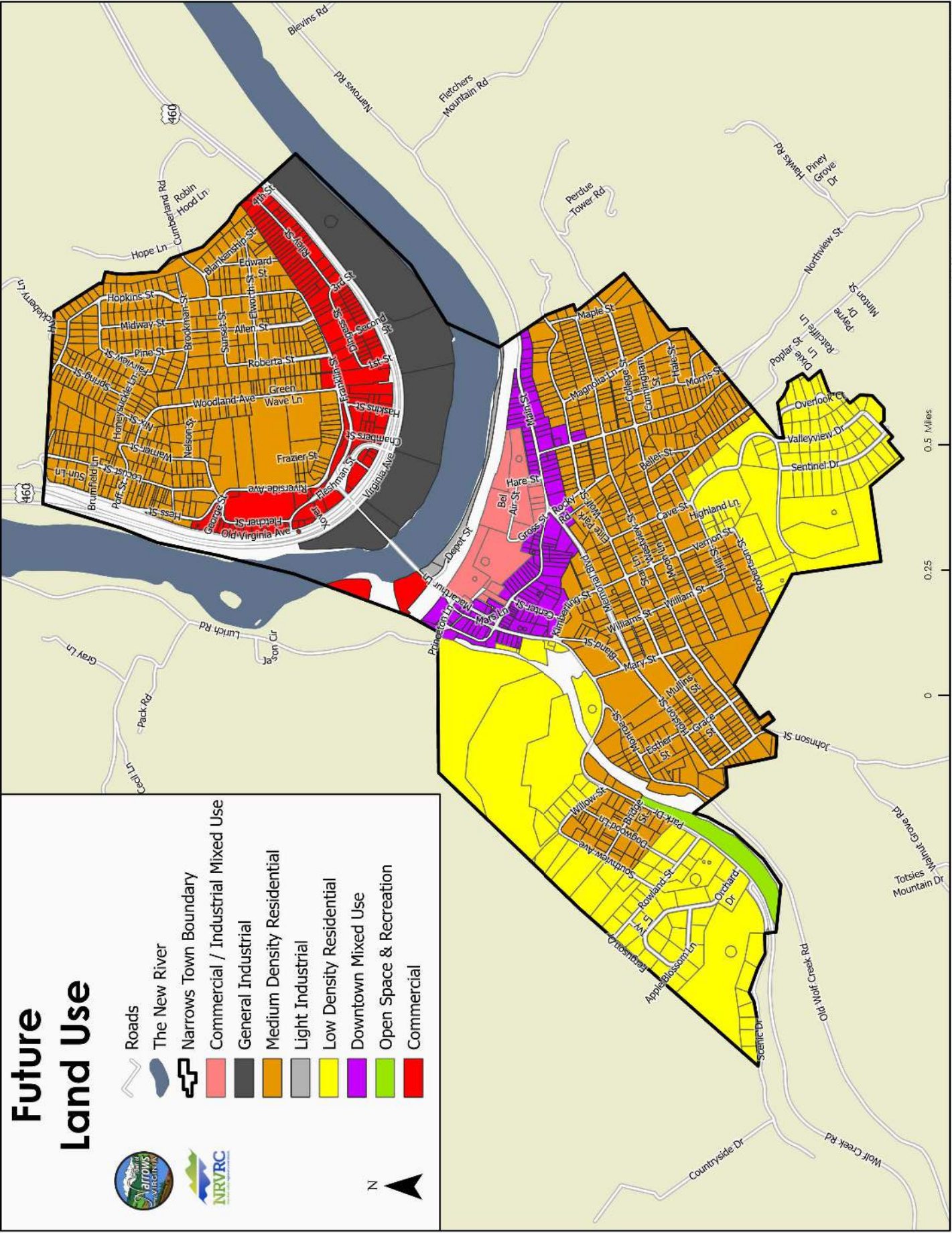
Fig 3.1 Narrows Downtown Revitalization Plan

Narrows Downtown Revitalization Plan – Creekside Trail Improvements Phase I and Farmers Market Improvements – (CDBG Community Improvement Grant Project)



Full view of Phase I Creekside Trail Improvements and Farmers Market Improvements proposed for Community Improvement Grant. See following pages for design details for each initiative.





Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Categories	Proposed Definition
Low Density Residential	Up to 5 dwelling units per acre. This category is intended for promoting detached single-family homes
Medium Density Residential	6- 10 dwelling units per acre. This category accommodates multi-dwellings forms of residential development with predominantly single-family detached residential.
Downtown Mixed Use	This designation allows mixture of retail, office, restaurant, entertainment, and residential uses horizontally or vertically.
Commercial	This designation is predominantly medium to large scale commercial uses. Includes retail sales, personal and professional uses, retail, wholesale, parking facilities, auto sales and service establishments, etc.
Commercial/Industrial Mixed Use	This designation is to provide areas that are suited to allow light industrial uses, commercial uses, warehousing, and employment centers. Buffers required if adjacent to residential uses
Light Industrial	This designation is to accommodate small scale light industrial, warehousing, and commercial and office uses
General Industrial	This designation allows primarily industrial uses Industrial use refers to manufacturing, assembly and research and development. Administrative offices that support manufacturing and wholesaling are included.
Civic	This designation applies to public or privately owned land involving activities for public purposes such as library, post office, utility, educational facility, or a religious facility
Recreation and Open Space	This designation is applied to land owned by the public and used for recreation. It is also applied to private open space and recreational lands.

Table 3.2 Future Land Use Categories

Future Land Use Element

GOAL 1: Promote orderly and balanced use of land to enhance economic prosperity of residents and businesses, and preserve the culture, natural beauty and unique character of the Town to establish it as a desirable place to live, work and visit.

Objective 1.1: The Town will have an effective land use pattern, maintain small town character, support a variety of land uses and protect and enhance its natural, cultural, and recreational assets.

Policy 1.1: Provide special attention to preserving and strengthening the economic activity in the downtown area.

Policy 1.2: Promote downtown revitalization by allowing a range of mixed land uses and making it more pedestrian friendly .

Policy 1.3: Prioritize development along US 460 corridor.

Policy 1.4: Explore options for encouraging re-use and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties and buildings.

Policy 1.5: Encourage and incentivize businesses to reduce vacant and underutilized properties and to create a vibrant environment in the Town.

Policy 1.6: Reduce or eliminate blight in town to promote overall attractiveness of the town.

Policy 1.7: Identify spaces for community gatherings to enhance residents' sense of community.

Policy 1.8: Identify major viewsheds and develop regulation to protect them.

Policy 1.9: Recognize the town's natural assets and protect them to remain in their best state.

Policy 1.10: Provide clarity and predictability in the land development planning and approvals process.

Policy 1.11: Update zoning and subdivision ordinances as needed to serve community needs and ensure consistency with Comprehensive Plan goals.





ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4. Economic Development

Economic Development Element Background

The purpose of the economic development element is to enhance the economic vitality and maximize the business and commercial potential of the Town. The economic data analysis and input gathered through community engagement helps to understand the current economic conditions and identify issues and opportunities. The element contains policies and actions to address issues and capitalize on opportunities.

Industries

According to the ACS data, there appears to be an overall job loss from 2010 to 2021. The sectors that have the most significant job losses include manufacturing and construction. 2021 data shows that the education and healthcare sector had the largest number of jobs and has experienced further job gains in the last 10 years. Other sectors that have witnessed jobs gains include the information sector; professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services sector; and arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services sector.

Industry Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	13	14	11	11	11	15	19	21	12	18	7	4
Construction	195	182	137	94	97	90	65	54	65	40	46	63
Manufacturing	275	252	247	216	228	249	249	211	227	227	173	167
Wholesale trade	0	7	7	4	5	6	0	0	5	4	4	5
Retail trade	101	95	53	87	99	135	139	116	111	128	62	83
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	35	32	38	12	17	16	39	40	53	44	41	23
Information	7	8	17	12	11	18	8	3	7	5	2	14
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	28	16	20	26	33	33	24	27	30	23	10	10
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	60	50	33	37	26	23	23	29	24	80	74	94
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	221	204	211	190	179	149	142	158	193	210	283	293
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	63	70	77	81	78	63	67	84	88	90	82	94
Other services, except public administration	56	47	42	59	37	40	35	29	9	11	41	37
Public administration	66	57	51	50	30	28	23	35	35	25	33	36
Total Jobs	1120	1034	944	879	851	865	833	807	859	905	858	923

Industry Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.2%	1.4%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.7%	2.3%	2.6%	1.4%	2.0%	0.8%	0.4%
Construction	17.4%	17.6%	14.5%	10.7%	11.4%	10.4%	7.8%	6.7%	7.6%	4.4%	5.4%	6.8%
Manufacturing	24.6%	24.4%	26.2%	24.6%	26.8%	28.8%	29.9%	26.1%	26.4%	25.1%	20.2%	18.1%
Wholesale trade	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	0.5%	0.6%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.5%	0.5%
Retail trade	9.0%	9.2%	5.6%	9.9%	11.6%	15.6%	16.7%	14.4%	12.9%	14.1%	7.2%	9.0%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3.1%	3.1%	4.0%	1.4%	2.0%	1.8%	4.7%	5.0%	6.2%	4.9%	4.8%	2.5%
Information	0.6%	0.8%	1.8%	1.4%	1.3%	2.1%	1.0%	0.4%	0.8%	0.6%	0.2%	1.5%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	2.5%	1.5%	2.1%	3.0%	3.9%	3.8%	2.9%	3.3%	3.5%	2.5%	1.2%	1.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5.4%	4.8%	3.5%	4.2%	3.1%	2.7%	2.8%	3.6%	2.8%	8.8%	8.6%	10.2%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	19.7%	19.7%	22.4%	21.6%	21.0%	17.2%	17.0%	19.6%	22.5%	23.2%	33.0%	31.7%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	5.6%	6.8%	8.2%	9.2%	9.2%	7.3%	8.0%	10.4%	10.2%	9.9%	9.6%	10.2%
Other services, except public administration	5.0%	4.5%	4.4%	6.7%	4.3%	4.6%	4.2%	3.6%	1.0%	1.2%	4.8%	4.0%
Public administration	5.9%	5.5%	5.4%	5.7%	3.5%	3.2%	2.8%	4.3%	4.1%	2.8%	3.8%	3.9%

Table 4.1 Industry Type Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Income

The median household income in the Town of Narrows in 2021 was \$50,333 which is slightly less than the median household income for Giles County which was \$57,911. There has been an increase of approximately 20% of the median income in the last 10 years. This data can help to understand if the median income is sufficient to cover standard costs of living.

Median Household & Per Capita Income

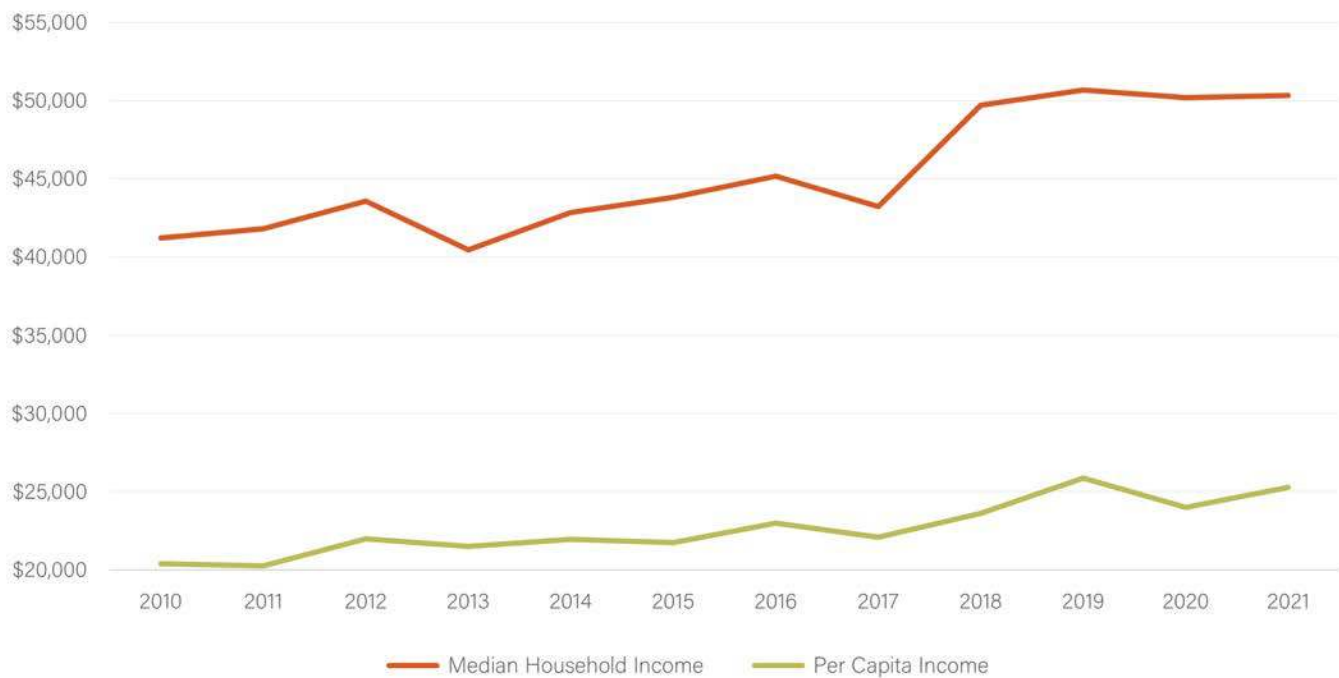


Fig 4.1 Median Household & Per Capita Income Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Year	Median Household Income	Per Capita Income
2010	\$41,193	\$20,364
2011	\$41,779	\$20,234
2012	\$43,558	\$21,991
2013	\$40,434	\$21,490
2014	\$42,823	\$21,951
2015	\$43,798	\$21,740
2016	\$45,156	\$22,986
2017	\$43,194	\$22,095
2018	\$49,688	\$23,614
2019	\$50,655	\$25,876
2020	\$50,163	\$23,983
2021	\$50,333	\$25,275

Table 4.2 Income Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Education

The educational attainment data helps in understanding the level of education within the population area. In the last ten years it can be observed that the number of people graduating high school and having a bachelor’s degree or higher has increased. This trend is desirable as the education level has a positive impact on the Town’s labor force.

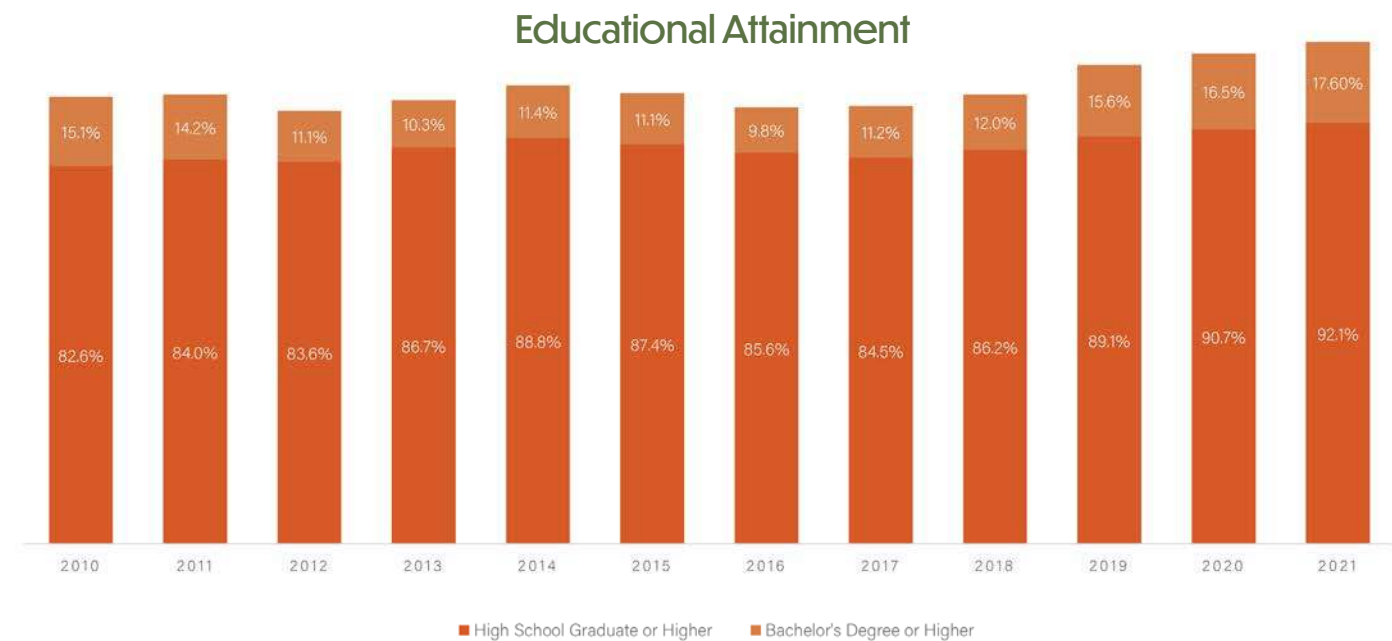


Fig 4.2 Educational Attainment Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Unemployment

The rate of unemployment within the Town has trended downwards and is currently under 2%. This could be indicative of higher labor force participation rate.

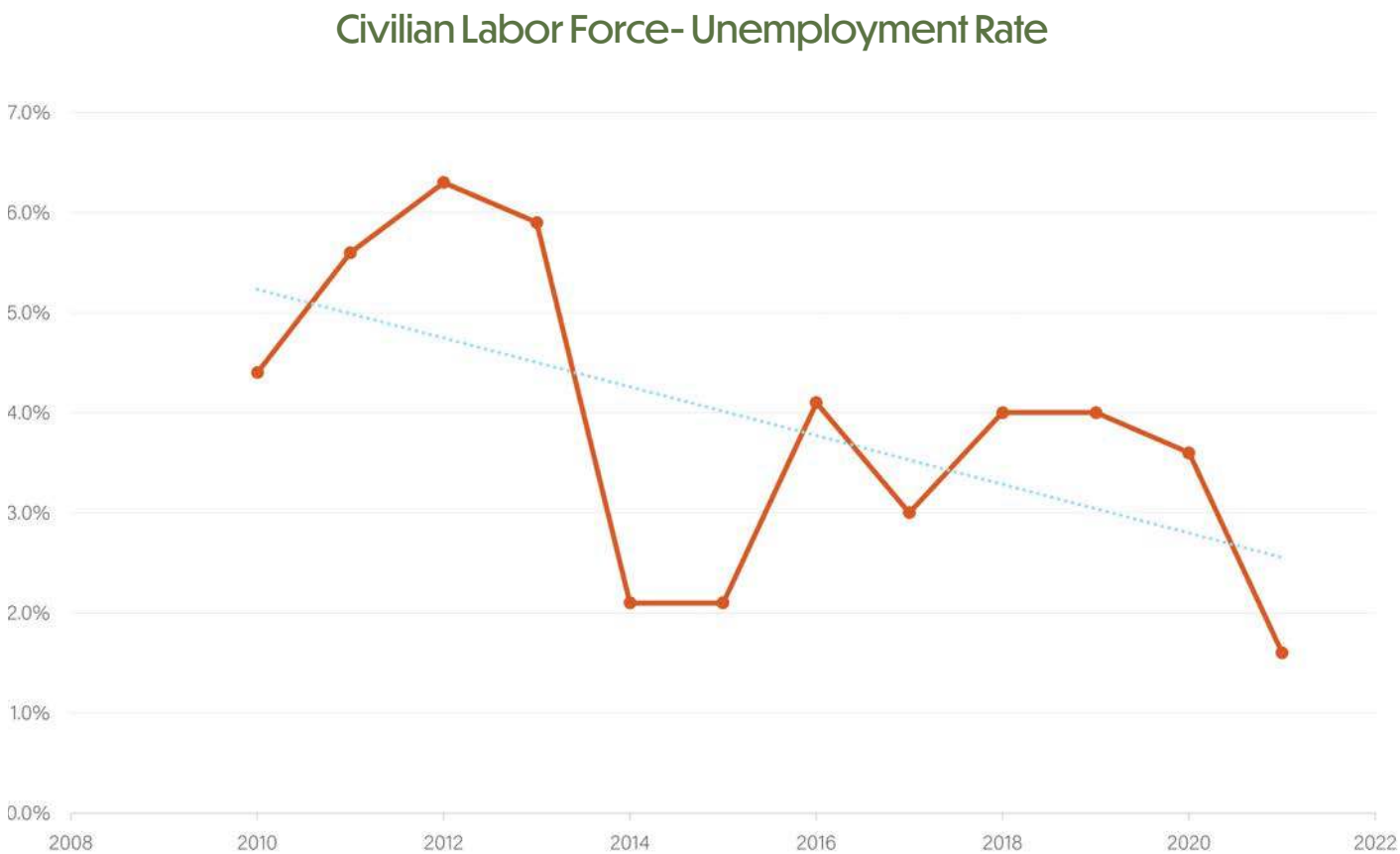


Fig 4.3 Unemployment Rate Source: American Community Survey (ACS)

Commute Time

The American Community Survey data shows that the average working Narrows residents spend approximately 24 minutes commuting to their jobs. Employment destinations for Narrows residents are mostly found within the New River Valley or nearby areas in West Virginia such as Princeton and Bluefield.

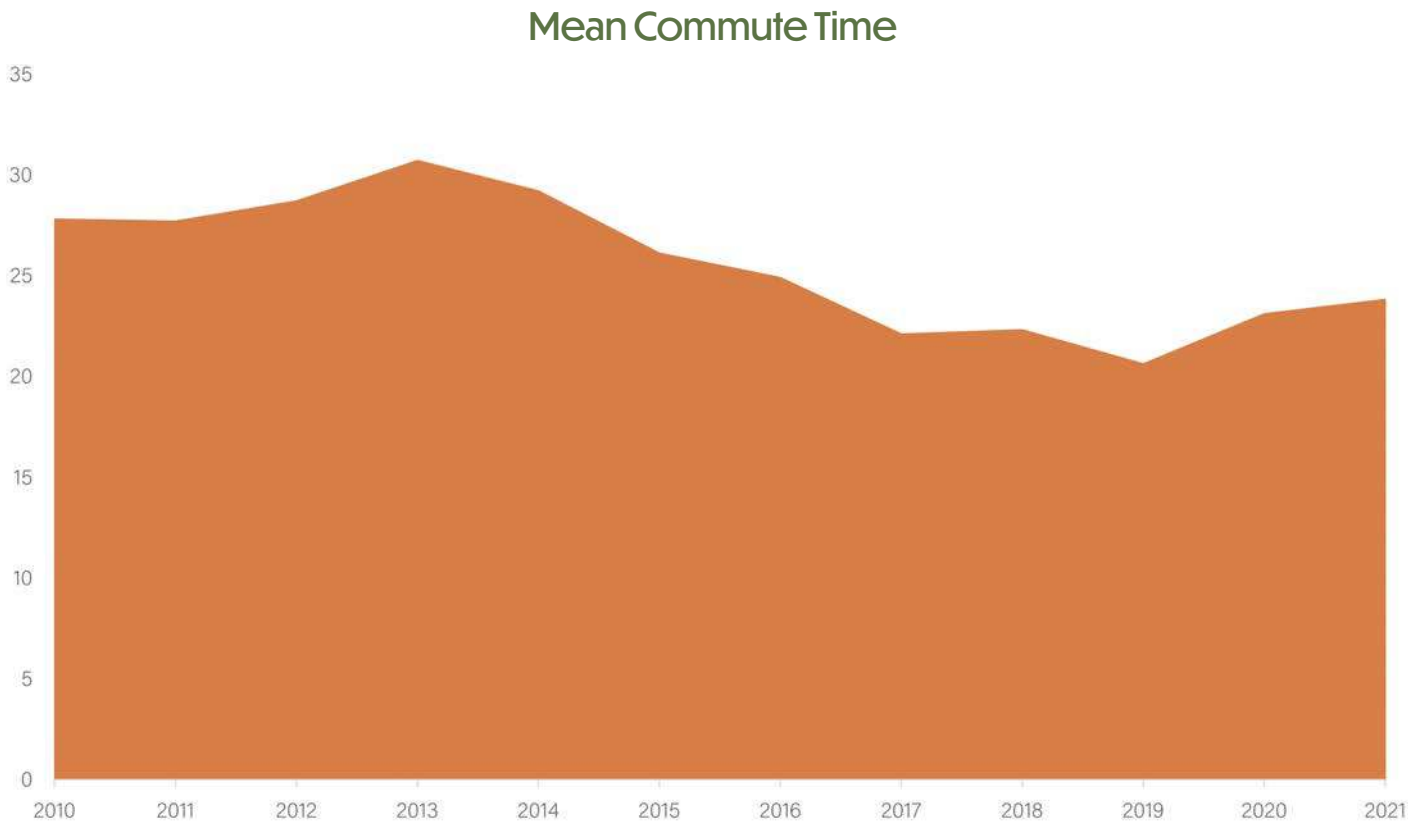


Fig 4.4 Mean Commute Time Source: American Community Survey

Tourism

The Economic Impact of Visitors is prepared annually for VTC by Tourism Economics. The following table shows the economic impact of visitors in Giles County between 2017 and 2021.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Percent Change
Travel Economic Impacts						
Employment	280	283	284	218	247	13.0%
Expenditures	\$ 26,781,725	\$ 28,425,823	\$ 29,630,971	\$ 21,378,902	\$ 31,824,398	48.9%
Labor Income	\$ 6,404,965	\$ 6,789,320	\$ 7,066,976	\$ 5,787,405	\$ 6,942,505	20.0%
Local Tax Receipts	\$ 1,111,182	\$ 1,148,255	\$ 1,195,830	\$ 909,929	\$ 1,204,364	32.4%
State Tax Receipts	\$ 754,023	\$ 799,930	\$ 834,199	\$ 573,650	\$ 829,320	44.6%

Table 4.3 Tourism Economic Impact Source: Virginia Tourism Council (VTC)

The Town natural resources such as the New River, Wolf Creek and Mill Creek waterfall, and recreational amenities and the historic downtown attract visitors. The Town has been working on revitalizing the downtown through efforts such as streetscape improvements, business district revitalization and encouraging investment in the downtown through public/private partnerships. The Town should continue these efforts to improve the physical aesthetics of the downtown. Promoting visitation should be focused around connecting outdoor recreational attractions to downtown. Further, expanding the number of events and festivals to establish a lively downtown environment and other recreational activities such as biking and hiking. To attract overnight visitors the Town should promote lodging options.

Business Support + Promotions

The Town has 75 businesses that hold business licenses. The Town should examine the need for staffing and building the economic development programs that will attract businesses and employers to Town and also to help with promotion, retention and expansion of existing businesses in Town. Some of the options for attracting business to town are enhancing infrastructure, technology, and availability of housing, and working towards establishing Narrows as an outdoor recreation destination. Promoting business associations could also help businesses collaborate in marketing efforts, as collective programs could be more effective than individual businesses spending money to market individually. The Town should also consider partnering with the County, regional entities, employers and higher education institutions to advance worker skills and aligning workforce to the needs of the different local or targeted industries.



Community Engagement QUOTES:

- “Commercial development of sites along Route 460; downtown small business recruitment/development”
- “Put more priority on using the New River as a selling point to attract new business”
- “Quality housing”
- “I have a large extended family and there is no where decent for them to stay once my bedrooms are full. The bank building could be converted to a boutique type of inn/ hotel. There is a nice lobby and plenty of office space that could be converted into bed rooms. There is a big need for this type of hotel. Not too large but big enough for families to have a place to stay when visiting home. Now Princeton or Blacksburg gets their money and they experience less connection to home. If we want tourism they need a room to sleep in. This would also help local businesses like Anna’s.”
- “Remote work opportunities. Make Narrows a good place to “work from home” especially Technology people. A consideration is an Incubator-type locations with servers and printers that charge a set fee for a seat, even better if we can get some company to pay for it.”
- “Fix up current un-occupied building to expand current businesses or bring in new business. ”
- “Utilization of the natural resources like the river, enhance the charm of the town like Floyd, promote local artisans and growers, enhance resources and upgrade schools”
- “Providing new jobs can stimulate the real estate market. Make it easier for small business to have a start.”

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES

Economic Development Element

GOAL 1: Attain thriving and stable economy with ample employment options and business opportunities.

Objective 1.1: Invest in attraction, retention and expansion of businesses and industries.

Policy 1.1.1: Collaborate with existing businesses and industries to identify issues and opportunities. Survey may include identifying types of training and assistance needed by businesses (including but not limited to entrepreneurship and management), a business' interest or ability to expand, and those that may be considering relocation.

Policy 1.1.2: Create or promote existing programs that support and nurture local businesses.

Policy 1.1.3: Pursue partnership with the County and regional economic development agencies to attract and promote growth of target industries.

Policy 1.1.4: Strategically collaborate with entities such as Celanese, Virginia Tech and Carillion to create opportunities for businesses and services to be located in the Town.

Policy 1.1.5: Continue to support marketing activities to highlight Town's businesses and events.

Policy 1.1.6: Improve broadband infrastructure in order to be competitive and attract and retain businesses.

Policy 1.1.7: Collaborate with the County to expedite and streamline permit processing to reduce cost of doing business.

Objective 1.2: Increase job opportunities through workforce training and access to employment

Policy 1.2.1: Make workforce training efforts accessible to residents.

Policy 1.2.2: Encourage adults not currently in the workforce to participate in workforce development, by promoting employment and job training opportunities.

Policy 1.2.3: Explore training and certificate classes offered to all ages in the community.

Policy 1.2.4: Educate businesses on the services and assistance offered by the Workforce Development Board to support them.

Policy 1.2.5: Develop creative programs and incentives that enhance skill-sets of youth and young professionals to be able to work and comfortably live in Narrows.

Policy 1.2.6: Promote vocational programs in skilled trades at Giles County Technology Center.

Objective 1.3: Create economic opportunities by promoting the Town's quality of life, natural and recreational amenities, and arts and culture.

Policy 1.3.1: Highlight the Town's high-quality primary and secondary education system, clean and scenic environment, and affordable housing.

Policy 1.3.2: Market recreational areas as a quality of life benefit.

Policy 1.3.3: Invest in opportunities such as creek-side trails and white-water rafting as recreational amenities for small business development and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Policy 1.3.4: Continue to invest in and enhance sports and recreational activities for youth.

Policy 1.3.5: Support artists by promoting the Town's holiday markets, craft fairs and other events.

Policy 1.3.6: Work with local artists to identify opportunities to promote arts and culture and attract tourists to Town to create economic benefits for artists.

Policy 1.3.7: Explore opportunities to locate facilities for artists in the downtown area.



HOUSING

5. Housing

Housing Element Background

The purpose of this element is to identify housing issues and deficits and develop policies to guide the Town to meet the housing needs of current and future residents.

The number of housing units in the Town of Narrows has slightly declined from 1090 units in 2011 to 1054 units in 2021. The housing stock consists of approximately 80% single-family detached dwellings (based on 2021 data), multifamily units such as duplex, triplex and apartments accounts for less than 6%. American Community Survey data from 2011 to 2021 shows that there has been an increase in the number of mobile homes in Town from 20 (about 2% of the total housing units in 2011) to 143 (approximately 14% of total units in 2021). This increase may be due to the fact that mobile homes are more affordable than stick built homes.



Fig 5.1 Total Housing Units Source: American Community Survey

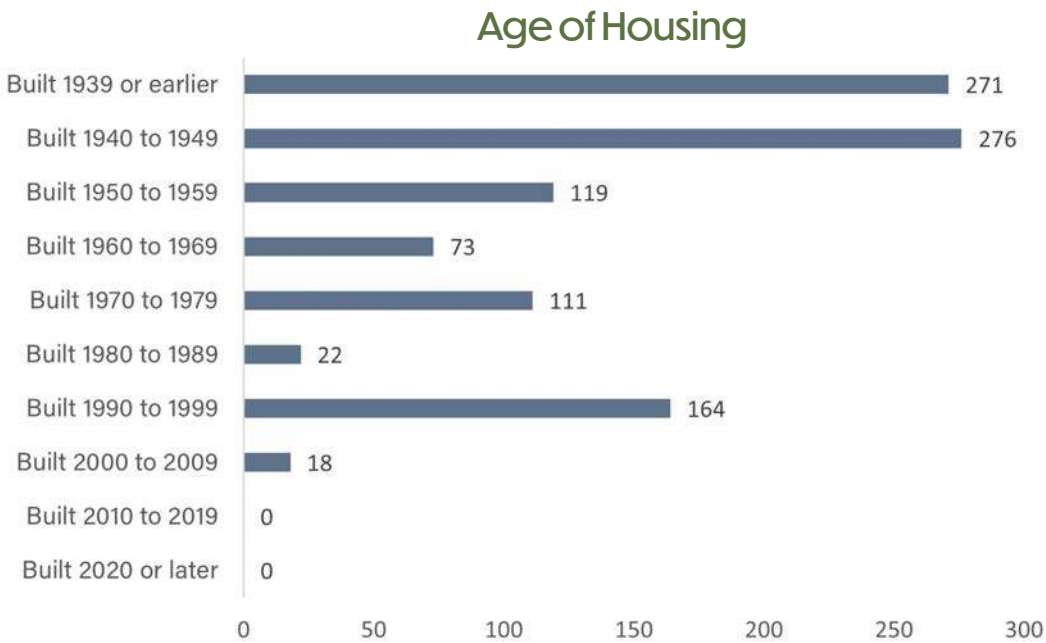


Fig 5.2 Age of Housing Source: American Community Survey

Housing Age

According to the ACS data shown in Table 4.1, more than 70% of Narrows’ housing structure were built before 1969, and 50% (547) of the total housing units (1054) in Narrows were built before 1950. The data also shows that there has not been any new housing construction since 2009. The Town has an aging housing stock, and this may mean there will likely be a demand for new housing in the future and the Town will need to promote residential development in order to keep and/or attract residents in the Town. With an aging housing stock, repair, rehabilitation, and remodeling activities will be needed in existing homes for improving quality, livability and energy efficiency. Improvements will also be needed to allow for aging in place. Survey results for housing related questions show that respondents rated new single-family homes, independent senior living, senior assisted and apartments as their top priorities for what they would like to see in Narrows.

Year Structure Built	Number
Built 2020 or later	0
Built 2010 to 2019	0
Built 2000 to 2009	18
Built 1990 to 1999	164
Built 1980 to 1989	22
Built 1970 to 1979	111
Built 1960 to 1969	73
Built 1950 to 1959	119
Built 1940 to 1949	276
Built 1939 or earlier	271
Total housing units	1,054

Table 5.1 Age of Housing Structure
Source: 2021 American Community Survey (ACS)

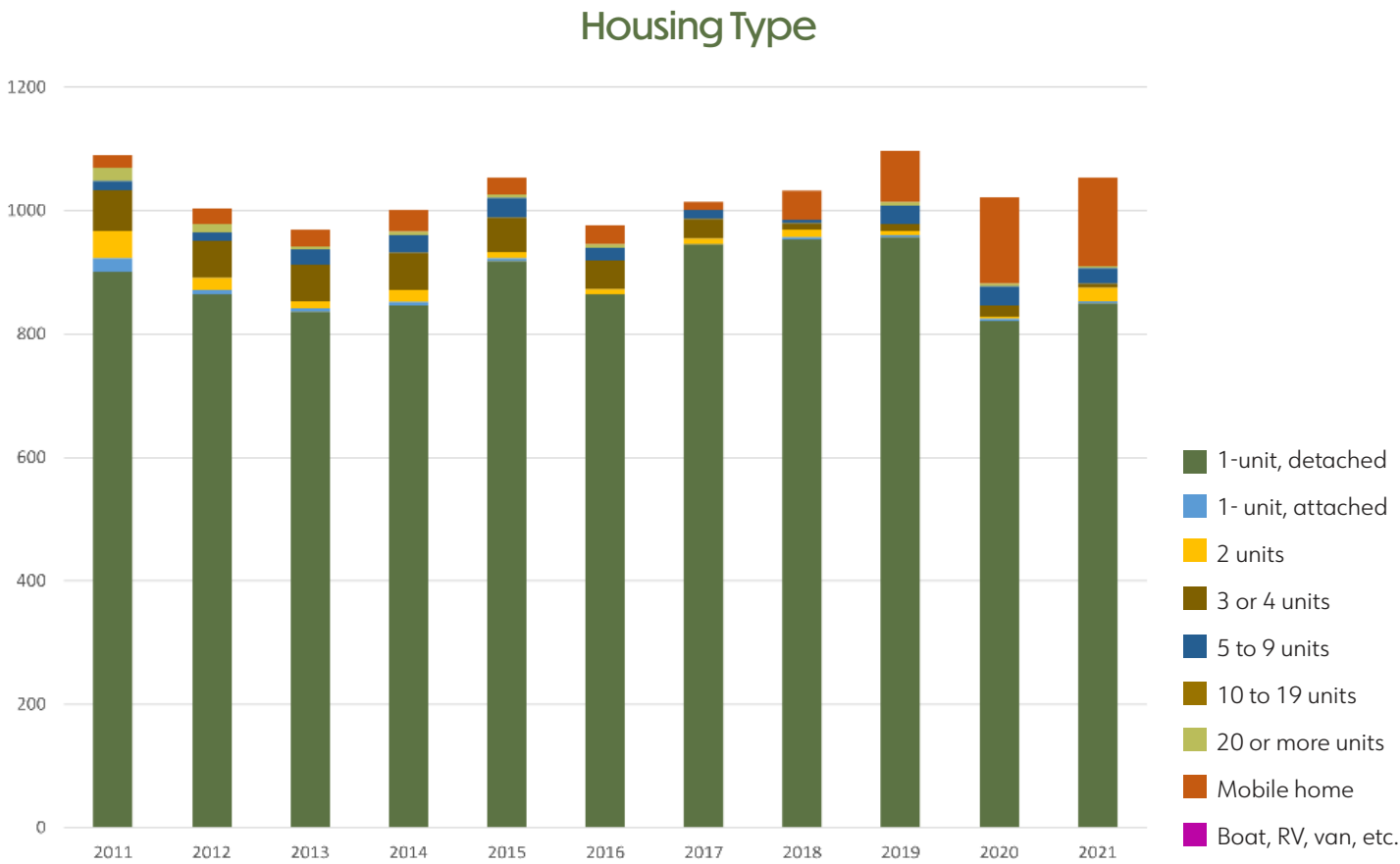


Fig 5.3 Housing Type Source: American Community Survey

Housing tenure refers to “the arrangements under which the household occupies all or part of a housing unit.” The types of tenure are ownership by household or rental. The graph in Figure 5.4 illustrates that most of the housing units in Narrows are owner occupied and this could be because these units are single-family detached units. The trend for both ownership and rental appears to be declining.



Fig 5.4 Housing Tenure Source: American Community Survey

The number of units that are vacant and trends of occupied versus vacant units were also examined within the Town. The number of vacant units in the Town is observed to have increased over the last decade as shown in Figure 5.5. (Refer Fig 5.6 Occupancy vs Vacancy).

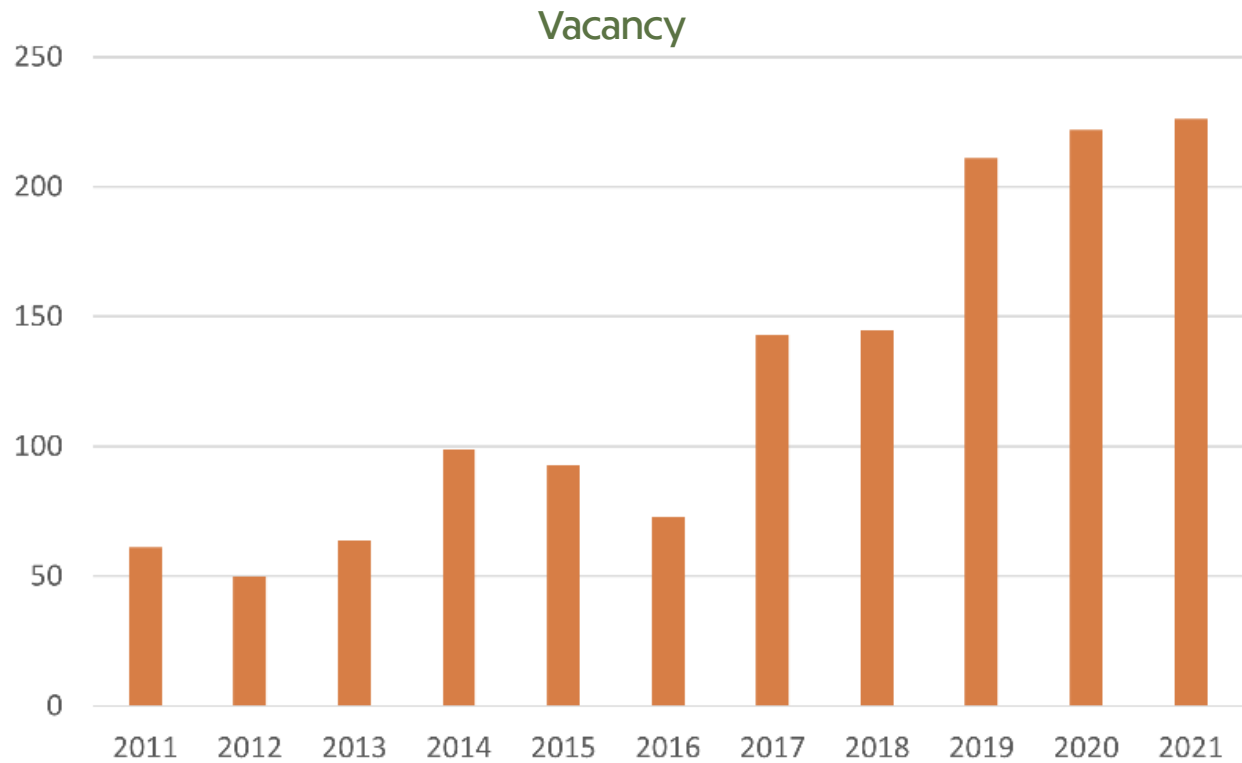


Fig 5.5 Vacancy Source: American Community Survey

Occupancy vs. Vacancy



Fig 5.6 Occupancy vs. Vacancy Source: American Community Survey

The Town recognizes the challenges facing the community and it is essential for the Town to focus on revitalization and promoting new development and redevelopment that aligns with local goals. Providing housing options that will give people the choice to live in Town at all stages of life is a primary focus area, as determined during the community engagement process. The Town can also conduct an independent inventory of housing conditions and develop policies to work with property owners to rehabilitate vacant and/or dilapidated properties. The vitality of a neighborhood can be negatively impacted by properties that are in disrepair.



Housing Element

GOAL 1: Meet the housing needs of current and future residents by facilitating adequate inventory of safe housing and available to a variety of income groups.

Objective 1.1: Encourage dwelling units of various types, sizes, and costs to meet the needs of current and prospective residents.

Policy 1.1.1: Compile an inventory of available infill parcels designated for new construction.

Policy 1.1.2: Partner with organizations such as Community Housing Partners, regional HOME Consortium, and Habitat for Humanity to provide information, technical assistance, and incentives to private developers and property owners to meet housing needs of all income groups.

Policy 1.1.3: Pursue partnership with the County and regional organizations to align activities, pool knowledge and resources, and develop a common housing vision.

Policy 1.1.4: Promote housing options that will allow people to age in place.

Objective 1.2: Improve existing housing stock by reducing substandard housing and enhancing aesthetic conditions of existing housing.

Policy 1.2.1: Identify housing that is substandard and have deteriorated structural and aesthetic conditions.

Policy 1.2.2: Develop programs to rehabilitate and remedy substandard housing.

Policy 1.2.3: Create a directory of contractors available for construction and rehabilitation projects.

Objective 1.3: Maintain affordable housing availability to meet the needs of all residents.

Policy 1.3.1: Continue to pursue state and federal financing assistance to rehabilitate housing units that will improve the quality of affordable housing.

Policy 1.3.2: Pursue partnership to develop homebuyer education and counseling programs to prepare families for homeownership.





TRANSPORTATION

6. Transportation

Transportation Background

The purpose of the transportation element is to assess the transportation needs of the Town and plan for mobility, safety and accessibility for residents, businesses and visitors to goods, services, employment and other destinations such as schools, parks and shopping. The element also promotes transportation options that would include walking and biking and encourages coordination of transportation planning and land use development. This transportation element is consistent with elements of the Commonwealth Transportation Board plans and programs.

Roads

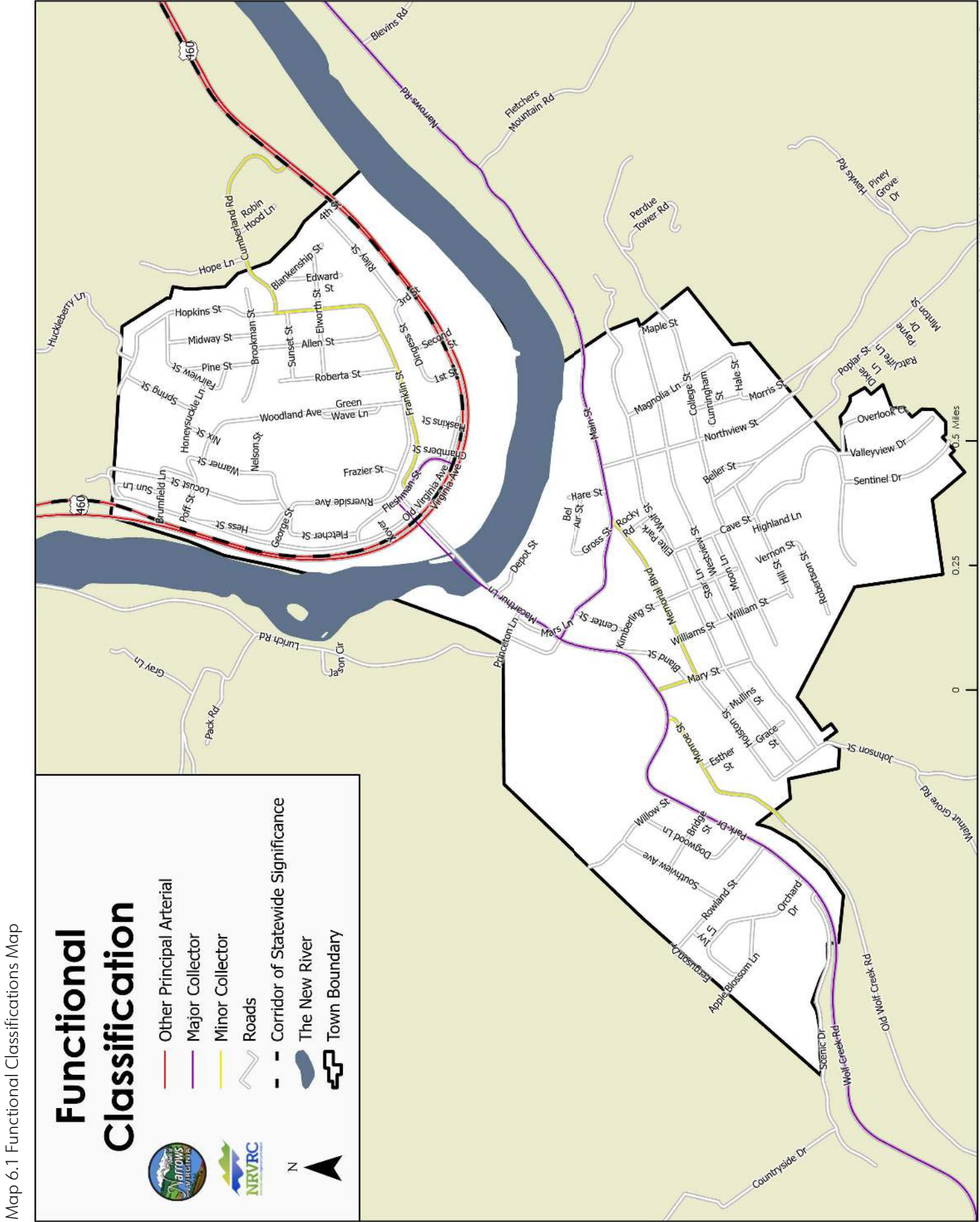
The major roadway that connects the Town of Narrows to Giles County and other parts of the state and West Virginia is US 460. This roadway is classified as other arterial and is part of the Heartland Corridor which is one of Virginia Corridors of Statewide Significance (COSS). This corridor connects Hampton Roads to Petersburg, Lynchburg, and Blacksburg and connects to the west to West Virginia and Kentucky. It is an important freight corridor, with Norfolk Southern’s Heartland Corridor running along the entire corridor, providing a connection between the Port of Virginia and the Midwest. In addition, there are some transit providers along the corridor along with multiple air facilities, both commercial and general aviation. State Route 100 and 61, classified as Major Collector roadways terminate in Narrows. Monroe Street and Memorial Blvd are two-lane Minor Collector roadways and all other streets within the Town are classified as local roads. The total streets mileage within the town is 30.75 miles.

Annual Average Daily Traffic Volume

Route	From	To	2001	2005	2010	2014	2019	2020	2021
US. 460	NCL Narrows	Fleshman St.	11,000	9,400	11,000	11,000	12,000	12,000	14,000
US. 460	Fleshman St.	ECL Narrows	13,000	14,000	13,000	13,000	15,000	15,000	17,000
SR 100	ECL Narrows	SR. 61	3,100	2,200	2,200	2,100	1,900	2,000	2,300
SR 61	WCL Narrows	Monroe St.	3,000	2,500	2,400	2,100	2,200	1,900	2,300
SR 61	Park St.	Kimberling St.	4,100	3,800	3,900	3,500	3,800	3,500	4,100
SR 61	Kimberling St.	Main St.	3,100	4,400	4,600	4,200	4,500	4,300	5,000
SR. 61	Main St.	SE of New River	4,600	5,200	5,300	5,100	5,100	4,900	5,700
SR 61	SE of New River	U.S. 460	5,000	5,500	4,400	4,400		4,500	5,200

Table 6.1 Daily Traffic Volume Source: Virginia Department of Transportation

Table 6.1 shows the historic Annual Average Daily traffic. The table shows traffic growth on the road segments of US 460 (NCL Narrows to Fleshman St. and Fleshman St. to ECL Narrows) and on two segments on State Road (SR) 61 (Kimberling to Main and Main to SE of New River). Traffic volume has declined on one segment of SR. 61 (SE of New River to US 460).



Map 6.1 Functional Classifications Map

Multimodal Transportation

Alternative modes of transportation such as walking and biking are opportunities to allow people to access destinations without cars. Within the Town there are sidewalks within the downtown area and SR. 61 bridge over the New River has sidewalks on both sides of the road. There are no dedicated bicycle lanes or shared lanes signage on any roads. There are bicyclists that ride on the roads in town and placing bicycle signs will help remind motorists to share the road with bicyclists and make the roadways accessible and safe for them. Within the mountains of Narrows, there are short trails leading to Mill Creek falls where visitors can enjoy hiking, mountain biking and fishing. From information received during the comprehensive plan update process it was determined that there is a need to enhance the trails within the Town.

Currently, there is no public transportation in Narrows. RIDESolutions offer park and ride information, carpool matching services and also help employers set up vanpool programs. There is a park and ride lot within the Town. Lack of public transportation poses a challenge to residents with disabilities and the elderly population.

The Town can conduct an inventory of road infrastructure and identify needs and high priority improvements to provide increased connectivity and add traffic calming features that will make the roadways more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. During focus group meetings and from the community survey we heard about the desire of community members to attract motorists on US 460 to the Town’s historic downtown and other activity areas. This goal can be achieved through working with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to install signage on US 460 indicating the upcoming exit into the Town and by enhancing the landscaping of the approach road on the Town of Narrows exit.

Community Engagement QUOTES:

“There needs to be a way to draw people off 460 into town...”

“14,000 cars pass by on SR 460 each day – how to capture those commuters.”

Streetlights

Within the Town streetlights are provided along major public streets and specific points of interest. Streetlighting on certain public streets may be desired and if it is unavailable, residents and landowners near such streets may petition for provision of street lighting, and depending on location and certain criteria being met, streetlights may be provided.

Community Engagement QUOTE:

“There needs to be lighting added to the street that the annex is on. Very dark, and highly trafficked area and needs lighting”

Public Parking

There are a few public parking lots within the Town and about 30 parking spaces across from the Police Department and Town Hall. Another parking lot near the old BB&T Bank on Monroe Street has about 20 parking spaces. Public on-street parking spaces and another public parking lot with 50 parking spaces are also available adjacent to the Farmers Market. Parking is observed to be sufficient in the Town.

Airports

The nearest airport is the New River Valley Airport located in Dublin, approximately 25 miles south on Rt. 100. The Airport has 6,201 feet by 150 feet runway and offers fuel, instrument landing system capability, freight, flight instruction, and general aviation service. Commercial passenger service is available at the Roanoke-Blacksburg Region Airport in Roanoke. This airport is located approximately 60 miles from Narrows and features services by major airlines. The other neighboring airport is the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport in Blacksburg.

Railways

Norfolk Southern Railway serves the Narrows area and Giles County with a main line connecting the Tidewater area of Virginia with Columbus, Cincinnati, and Chicago to the west. The railroad maintains an office at the old Narrows depot. Narrows is located along Norfolk Southern’s Heartland Corridor. The railroad made significant investments in recent years to increase tunnel clearances on this route to enable handling of double-stack container traffic between the Virginia ports and the Midwest.

Passenger rail service is not available in Narrows. Amtrak’s Cardinal Route passes through West Virginia and Virginia, north of the Narrows area. Amtrak’s Cardinal service has stops in Hinton, White Sulphur Springs, Alderson, and Prince, West Virginia. The Cardinal also stops in Clifton Forge and Staunton, Virginia.

Through an agreement with the Commonwealth of Virginia, Amtrak Northeastern regional passenger service was extended to Roanoke in 2017. In the New River Valley passenger rail service will be extended to Christiansburg and the site for a station has been identified.

Commuting Patterns

The 2020 Inflow/Outflow report shows that 758 workers travel outside the Town for work and 372 workers from outside the Town travel to Narrows for work. Approximately 27 workers both live and work within the Town. The Public Schools is one of the large employers within the Town.

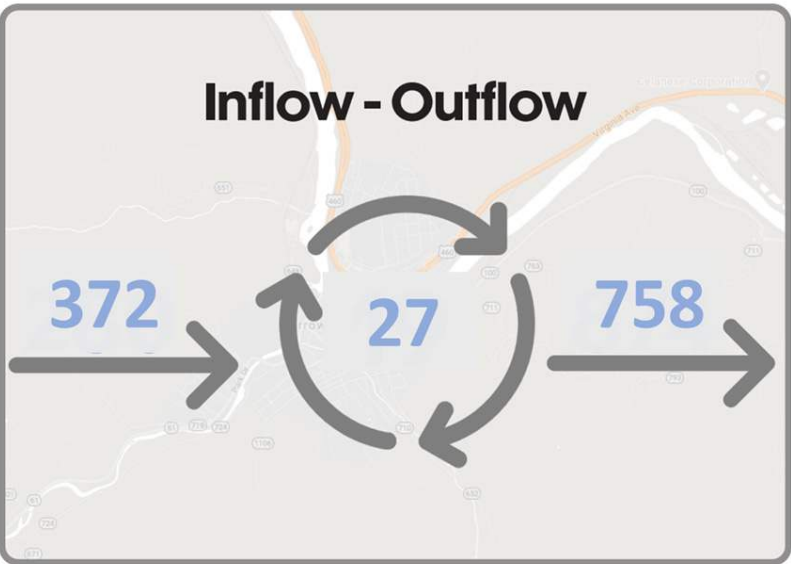


Fig 6.1 Inflow/Outflow Source: US Census On The Map

Growth Area

The Town desires to encourage mixed-use development, guide orderly future land use development and provide public infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective way . One of the ways the Town proposed to achieve this is by designating the entire Town limits as a growth area. Please refer to Map 6.2. The Growth Area identified in the comprehensive plan update meet the intent of Section 15.2-2223.1 of the Code of Virginia.

The Virginia Code also states that growth areas adopt traditional neighborhood design (TND) concepts. The concepts include:

- (i) pedestrian-friendly road design,
- (ii) interconnection of new local streets with existing local streets and roads,
- (iii) connectivity of road and pedestrian networks,
- (iv) preservation of natural areas,
- (v) mixed-use neighborhoods, including mixed housing types, with affordable housing to meet projected family income distributions of future residential growth,
- (vi) reduction of front and side yard building setbacks, and (vii) reduction of subdivision street widths and turning radii at subdivision street intersections.

Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP)

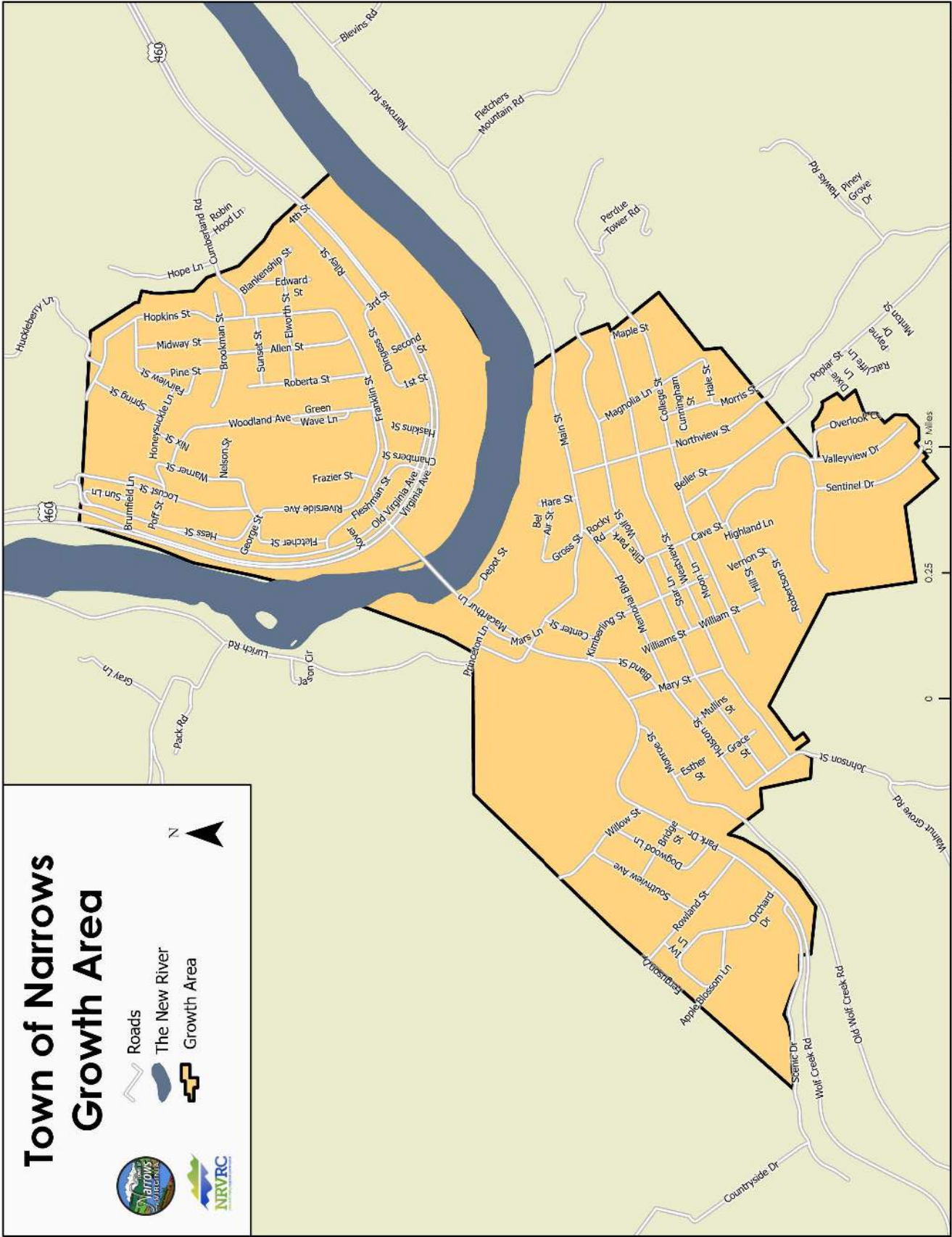
As required by law, the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) allocates public funds to transportation projects over six-fiscal years, comprising the Six-Year Improvement Program (SYIP). Projects include improvements to the interstate, primary, secondary and urban highway systems, public transit, ports and airports and other programs.

SYIP Process

The CTB updates the SYIP each fiscal year. As revenue estimates are updated, new priorities are identified, and existing projects advance. The fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30. Every fall, public meetings are held across the state on project priorities and the SYIP. Public input is taken into consideration as the next update of the SYIP is drafted and presented to the CTB in the spring. Public meetings are held on the draft SYIP and the CTB adopts the final program in June. For information about SYIP projects please see weblink below:
<https://syip.virginia.gov/Pages/allProjects.aspx>



Map 6.2 Growth Area



Transportation Element

GOAL 1: Enhance and maintain the Town's transportation network to meet the needs of downtown residents and businesses, and visitors of the community.

Objective 1.1: Develop a transportation system that ensures access and mobility for everyone and efficient movement of goods.

Policy 1.1.1: Improve connectivity among local, regional and state transportation systems.

Policy 1.1.2: Coordinate with regional and state transportation planning agencies to identify transportation improvement priorities.

Policy 1.1.3: Collaborate with VDOT to improve areas near the approach route from US Route 460 to downtown by streetscape enhancements and signage to inform drivers of their proximity to the Town.

Policy 1.1.4: Enhance walkability and emphasize community character along local streets.

Policy 1.1.5: Inventory all sidewalks and identify ways to improve the existing pedestrian network and possible future expansions.

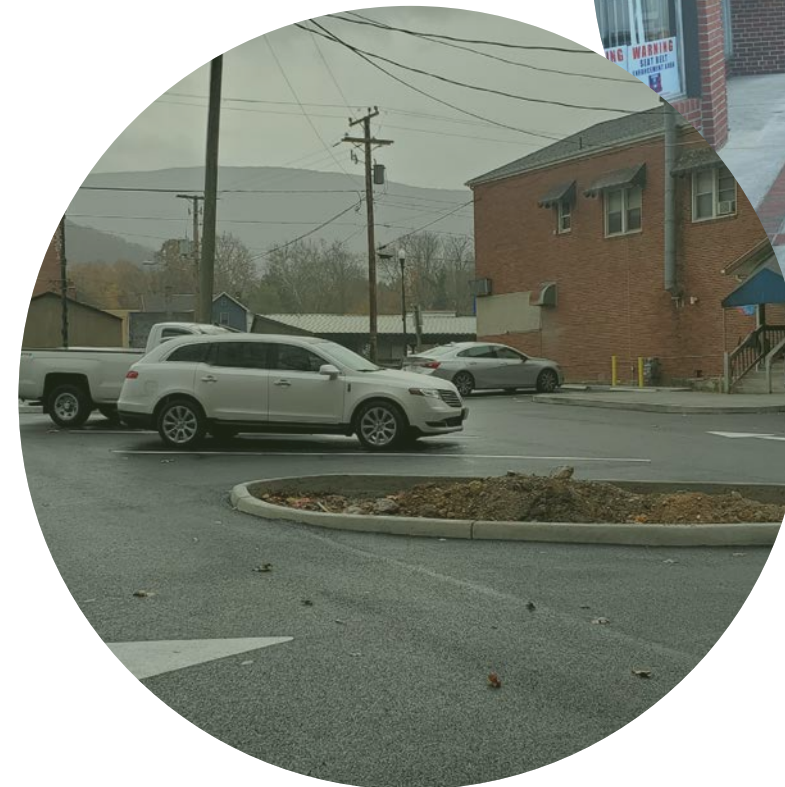
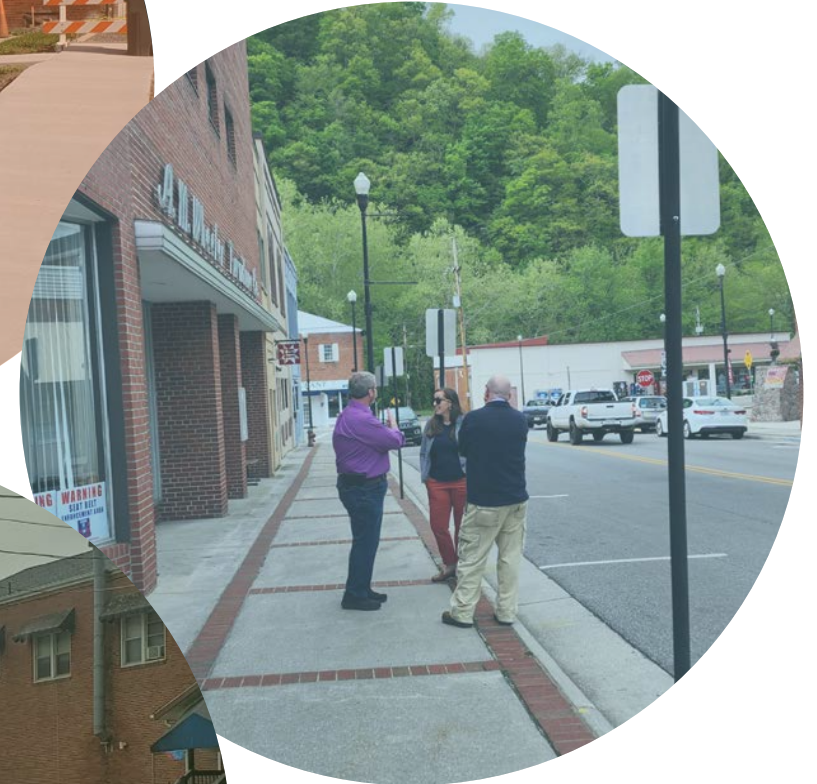
Policy 1.1.6: Address areas with safety and accessibilities problems.

Policy 1.1.7: Explore opportunities for alternative transportation options for non-drivers such as seniors, low-income families and individuals with disabilities.

Policy 1.1.8: Strive to be a bike friendly town by defining bicycle accommodations by striping, sharrow or signage and install bike parking.

Policy 1.1.9: Improve trail networks to the Mill Creek Nature Park and other natural areas in town.

Policy 1.1.10: Pursue funding options available through federal, state and regional grants to implement roadway, bicycle, pedestrian and trail improvements.





INFRASTRUCTURE

7. Infrastructure

Public Infrastructure and Services Background

Infrastructure such as water, sewer, stormwater and public services such as police, fire and education are vital parts of our daily lives. The Town provides most of the public infrastructure and services except for broadband which is provided by private entity, and education and library which is provided by Giles County. The Town desires to have infrastructure and services in place that support the needs of the current residents and businesses and also pave the way for attracting new businesses and residents to Town.

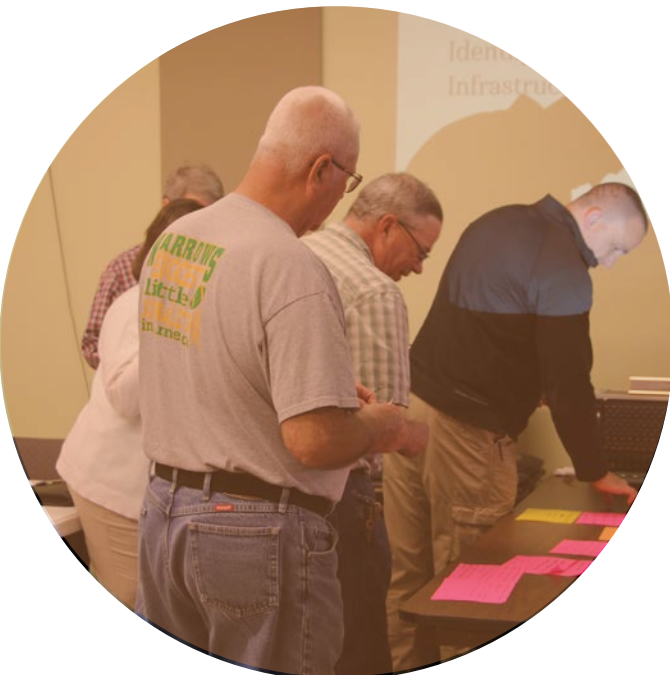
Water

Potable water to the Town is supplied by Giles County Public Service Authority (PSA). Giles County’s primary water sources are two wells. The PSA has a water treatment plant which is located in Bluff City and sells treated bulk water to the Town. The Town’s water supply infrastructure consists of three water storage tanks with storage capacities of 500,000 gallons, a booster pump station, and a distribution system. The water supply system serves nearly 1,200 connections and the daily total water usage on the water system is approximately 150,000 to 180,000 gallons per day.

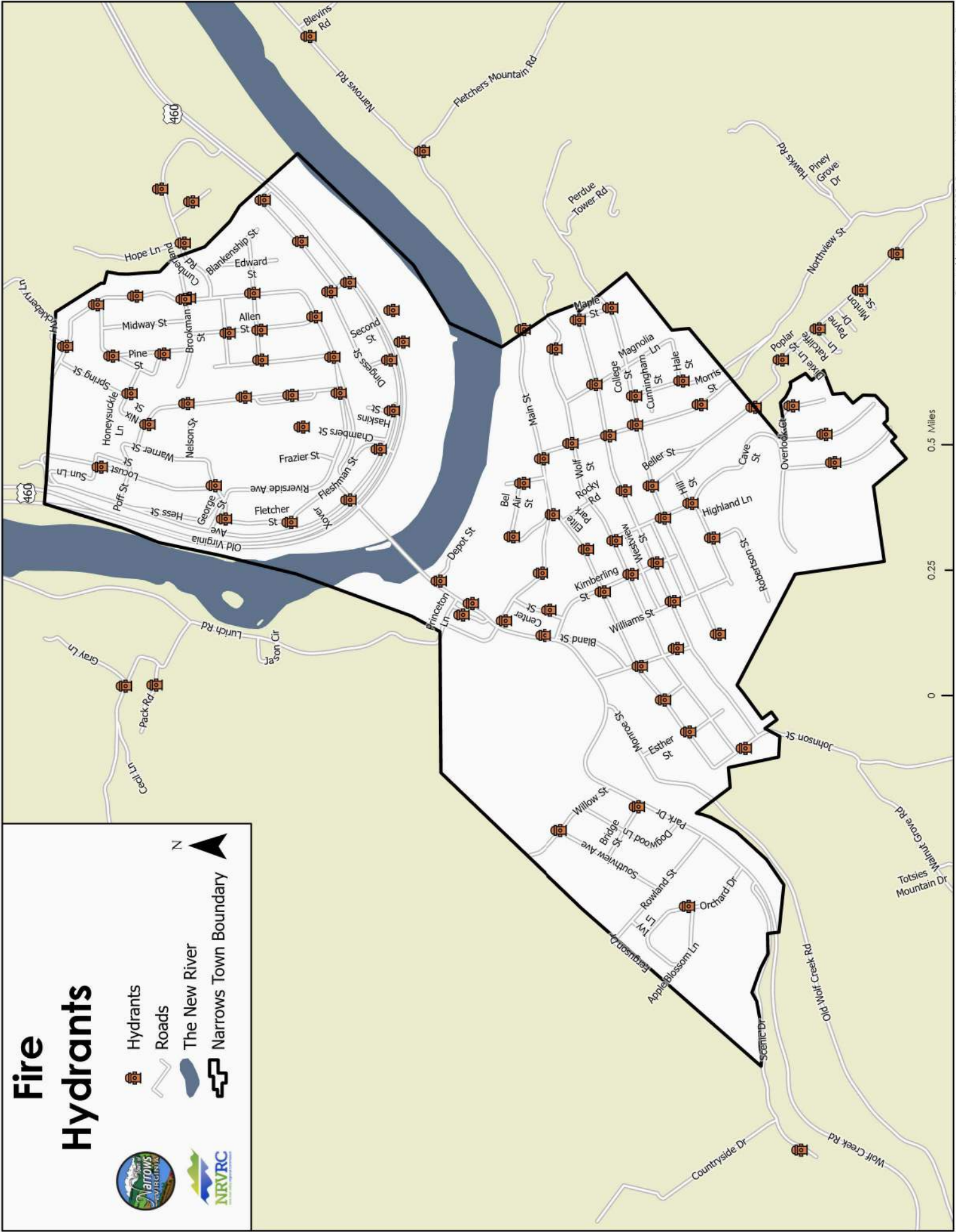
Water service is available throughout the Town and in several areas immediately outside the corporate limits. On the north side, the water service area currently includes the corporate limits past Locust Street and along Cumberland Road. On the south side, the water service area extends along Wolf and Johnson Streets. A primary service area outside the Town is the Mill Creek area where the water distribution system serves more than sixty homes.

The Town’s water is considered to be high quality. According to the Town’s 2022 Drinking Water Quality Report, there were no contaminant levels that exceeded acceptable limits.

The Town strives to provide safe drinking water and dependable water service. It is aware of its aging water infrastructure and that some parts of the distribution system is reaching its end-of-life.



Map 7.1 Water Lines and Hydrants



Wastewater

The Town’s wastewater system consists of a collection system which serves 962 residential and commercial customers. The wastewater service area includes the entire Town limits and surrounding areas adjacent to Town. The Town has 15.7 miles of gravity sewer pipes, 430 manholes, 2100 feet of force mains and five pump stations that are used to pump sewage from locations where gravity flow to the wastewater treatment plant is not possible. The wastewater treatment plant is located at 144 MacArthur Lane just below the Route 61 bridge. The treatment plant capacity is 250,000 gpd and current flow rates average just over 100,000 gpd.

Most of the wastewater collection system was constructed around 1950. Addressing the aging wastewater system is a priority for the Town as the infrastructure has reached the end of its life cycle and has experienced groundwater infiltration since its construction. The Town is working hard to replace and repair wastewater lines and mapping out their location using Ground Penetrating Radar and ArcGIS technology as the Town lacks documentation of exact line locations.

The town is working on creating asset management plans for the water system and the wastewater system that will prioritize replacement of aging infrastructure. There are no plans to expand either system from their current configurations.

Solid Waste

The PSA provides curbside collection of garbage to residential and commercial properties. It provides weekly pickup service and users pay a monthly fee. The Giles County Public Service Authority manages the Town’s garbage collection, transportation and disposal of waste. The waste is disposed at the New River Resource Authority Landfill located in Pulaski County, Virginia.

Recycling services are also provided by the PSA. There are large drop-off boxes available at the convenience center located on Lurich Road (Stockpen) where residents can take their recycling materials. The centers are free for all residents within Giles County.

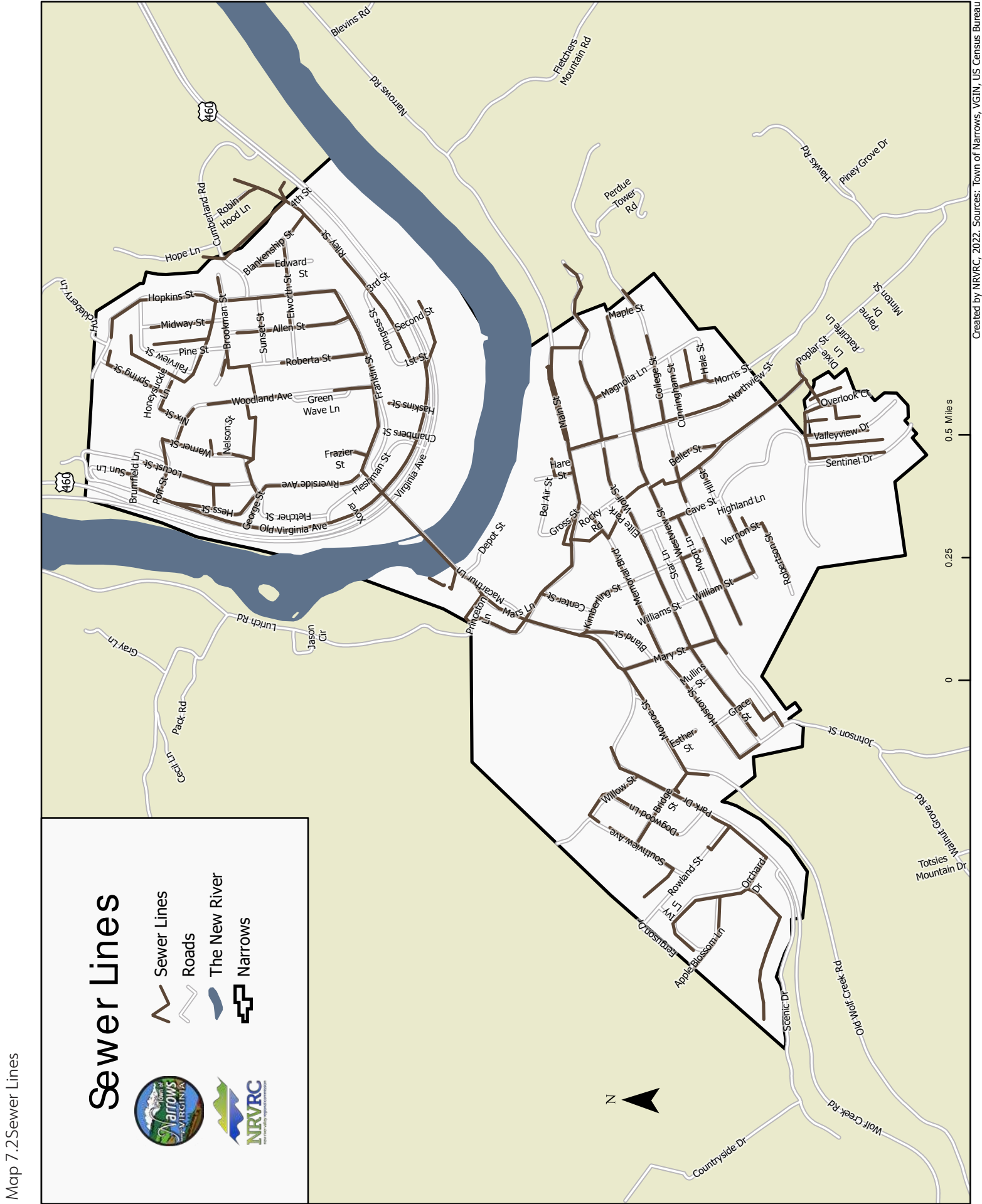
Stormwater

The Town maintains public storm-water drainage facilities that are for collecting water from the streets. These facilities are for reducing waterlogging and flood risk.

Any development activity that will cause land disturbance beyond a certain area threshold according to Virginia Code are required to prepare a stormwater management plan. Within the Town of Narrows the review of stormwater plans are conducted by Giles County.

Broadband

Broadband is a high speed wired or wireless internet service. In Narrows, Optimum is the only entity that provides broadband service. The speed as seen from FCC database shows 25/3 Mbps (download/ upload) speed for the Town. In most urban and suburban areas in the United States, up to 1Gbps broadband services are available for both residential and business use. In the digital economy of today, high internet speed is critical for businesses to be successful, and residents have access to online services. The Town can facilitate discussion and coordination and participating in regional efforts to improve internet service in the Town.



Public Safety

Police

The Narrows Police Department is led by the Police Chief and has 5 full-time officers and 1 part-time officer. The Narrows Police Department is located at 210 Main Street. The officers perform various tasks such as patrol work, crime investigation, and community work such as safety checks and child seat installation and seat checks. The Police department has mutual aid agreement with the county, state and federal law enforcement agencies. A priority for the Town is to prevent illegal drug activity and create awareness among community members to avoid substance and drug abuse. Partnership between the Police and other social services entities may be needed to address this need.

Fire

The Narrows Volunteer Fire Department’s vision is to always provide the most efficient, safe, and aggressive fire service operations possible while ensuring that everyone goes home. It is located at 133 Center Street. Of its 30 members, 20 members are Emergency medical technicians (EMT), and 4 are firefighters. They respond to fires, auto accidents, hazardous material spills and flooding. As an outreach to the community, they conduct school fire drills and organize and participate in community events such as Pig Roast event, Bingo and Kid Fishing Day. To enhance members’ skills regular training is provided. The department maintains mutual aid coordination with regional emergency response providers as appropriate to protect life and ensure safety.

The primary need within the department is a new station or updating the existing building as it was built in the 1950s and cannot accommodate new trucks. Furthermore, there is also a need for a new truck and additional trainings to equip volunteers with resources to meet the changing needs of the community.



Library

The library originally opened in 1939 in the Riffe’s Funeral Parlor in Narrows, VA, and was known as the Narrows Woman’s Club Library. In 2000, the long-serving librarian, Iris Brammer retired, and in her honor, the library was renamed to Iris Brammer Public Library, and its current location is 109 Mary Street. The library’s mission is to be a strong community partner that offers programs, resources and services to enrich the lives of the community members and encourage life-long learning.

The library has an automated card system and offers programs for children and adults. Community members can access the computer and free Wi-Fi which is helpful especially for those who do not have computer or high-speed internet at home. The library is considering some technological changes in the near future. One of the concerns is that the library has only one staff member and this limits program offerings. The building also needs to be updated with better lighting and windows and more rooms for meeting spaces.

Education

The mission of Giles County Public Schools is to educate, challenge and encourage students by providing a high-quality education. In Giles County there is a total of six schools - three elementary/ middle schools, two high schools and the Technology Center. Within the Town of Narrows there are two schools - Narrows Elementary/Middle School which is Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 7, and Narrows High School for students from Grades 8 to 12. The Town will pursue partnership and collaboration with Giles County School Board to achieve great success for the students from Narrows.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES

Public Infrastructure + Services Element

GOAL 1: Provide needed and adequate public infrastructure and services.

Water, Sewer and Solid Waste:

Objective 1.1: Maintain and improve water, sewer, solid waste and drainage facilities and service.

Policy 1.1.1: Conduct assessment of the water system and components to identify aging segments that need immediate attention.

Policy 1.1.2: Assess sewer system to identify sewer lines that are necessary to be upgraded to address infiltration and inflow concerns.

Policy 1.1.3: The construction and expansion of utilities improvements shall be purposefully planned to protect existing investments and to minimize disruption of services.

Policy 1.1.4: New development requests shall be reviewed for availability of water, sewer and solid waste capacity. Applicants shall estimate water and sewer demand to evaluate how their projects will impact the Town's water and sewer and determine if there are any deficiencies or needed improvements for the proposed development.

Public Safety (Police and Fire):

Police

Objective 1.2: Continue to improve efforts to provide safety and security to the community.

Policy 1.2.1: Continue to enhance existing programs that build partnerships with the community.

Policy 1.2.2: Maintain adequate staffing and provide for needed equipment upgrades and replacements.

Policy 1.2.3: Continue to implement mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions, and state and federal law enforcement agencies.

Policy 1.2.4: Explore opportunities to collaborate with health and social service agencies to identify programs and services to help prevent and reduce substance misuse.

Fire

Objective 1.3: Protect the community from fire and other related hazards.

Policy 1.3.1: Identify a site where a new fire station can be located.

Policy 1.3.2: Explore funding to acquire a new fire truck.

Policy 1.3.3: Promote cross training of firefighters and EMS personnel.

Policy 1.3.4: Continue to implement mutual aid agreements with other jurisdictions.

Policy 1.3.5: Continue to conduct outreach programs to educate community on fire safety.

Policy 1.3.6: Continue to host and participate in community events to positively impact youth and the community.

Education

Objective 1.4: Collaborate with Giles County to provide access to excellent facilities and high quality of education for children and youth in Narrows.

Policy 1.4.1: Support Giles County and School Board to evaluate enrollment, maintain and offer state of the art facilities.

Policy 1.4.2: Support co-location of parks, schools, and community facilities to leverage resources.

Broadband

Objective 1.5: Improve communications (cell phone coverage and broadband internet) infrastructure to increase availability and reliability.

Policy 1.5.1: The Town will participate in efforts by County and Regional entities to enhance broadband capabilities.

Policy 1.5.2: Support the development of communications infrastructure to facilitate the use of latest technologies by residents, students and businesses.

Policy 1.5.3: Encourage internet providers to build out broadband infrastructure to provide fast and most reliable service.

Library

Objective 1.6: Provide programs, resources, and services to meet the needs of the community and enrich their lives.

Policy 1.6.1: Conduct on-going evaluation of the current collection and programs to continue to meet the needs of the community.

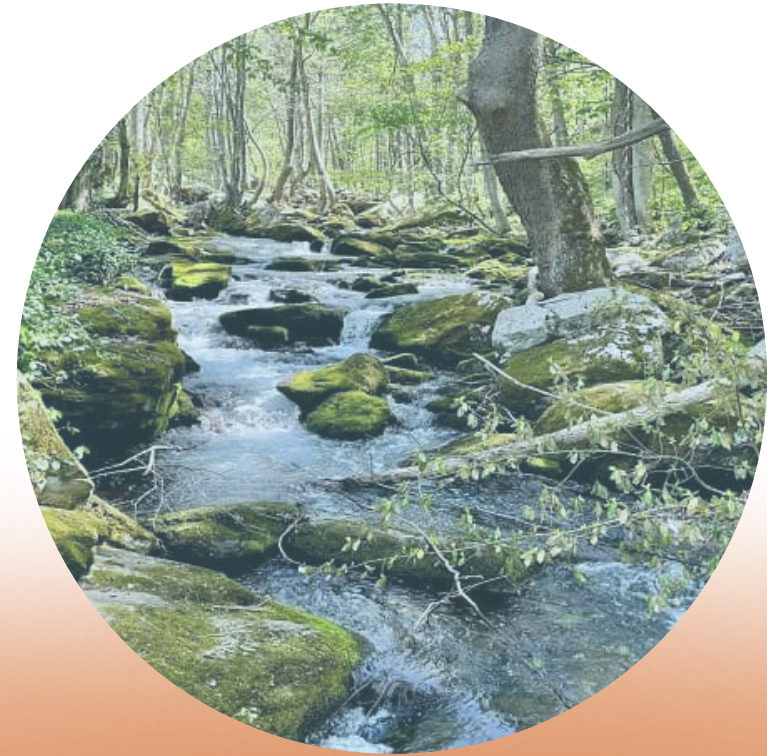
Policy 1.6.2: Add a new staff member to support mobile library, extended of hours of operation, new activities for all age group, and other services.

Policy 1.6.3: Upgrade catalogue database.

Policy 1.6.4: Continue to explore opportunity to increase local funding in order to qualify for Grant-in-Aid.

Policy 1.6.5: Conduct library promotion program.

Policy 1.6.6: Determine renovation opportunity of existing facility to accommodate meeting rooms and improve the environment with new windows and lighting.



NATURAL, HISTORIC, CULTURAL + RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

8. Natural, Historic, Cultural + Recreational Resources

Resources Background

The purpose of this element is to improve the quality of life of residents by protecting the natural environment and historical and cultural assets, and by providing recreational opportunities, which will also foster a better sense of community.

Natural, Historic + Cultural Resources

The Town boasts of beautiful scenery, with the New River gently meandering through it, and the surrounding creeks and mountains. The Town should pursue efforts to protect the natural viewsheds that define the character of the community. Certain areas of the Town’s footprint along the New River, Wolf Creek and Mill Creek are located within the defined floodplains. The Town should evaluate the need for new measures of protecting the most sensitive natural areas.

The Town has a rich history which is well documented in research documents that provide evidence of archaeological and historical sites within its boundaries. The Town of Narrows contains an archaeological site, which is located on the north bank of the New River, just east of the State Route 61 bridge. In addition, the downtown has some notable historic structures- such as the MacArthur Inn, the rail depot/station and railroad overpass (over MacArthur Lane). The Narrows Commercial Historic District received a historic district designation in 2012. The district includes portions of Main Street, Mary Street, MacArthur Lane, Monroe Street, Depot Street, Princeton Lane, and Center Street. Several commercial buildings in downtown Narrows are listed as contributing to the historic district, which is centered on the intersection of Main Street, Monroe Street, and MacArthur Lane. The library is another amenity that is located in the downtown area.

The Narrows Farmers Market is located downtown on Monroe Street. The facility features regular market hours on Thursdays and Saturdays. The activities at the market contribute to downtown commercial vibrancy and promote a sense of community within the Town. The Town could further enhance its downtown placemaking by improving pedestrian facilities, streetscaping, creating public spaces, promoting more events and supporting protection of arts and culture.



Parks and Recreation

The Town of Narrows has significant recreational destinations within or near the Town. They are:

- Narrows Town Park: Also known as the Boom Park, it is located on five acres situated between Wolf Creek and Park Drive in Narrows. Locals call the park “The Boom” because of the booming sounds made by logs many years ago as they traveled down the creek from logging activities upstream. The park offers two basketball courts, a changing house with full bathroom facilities, and a variety of new playground equipment. Within the park there is a Splash Pad that is available during the splash pad operation hours.
- Mill Creek Nature Park: This property features several hiking trails on 145 acres owned by the Town at the end of Northview Street. Visitors can take a trail to scenic falls or enjoy mountain biking or fishing.
- Camp Success Campground: Located on State Route 68 (Princeton Lane) at the confluence of Wolf Creek and New River, this primitive campground is 16 acres of land and the property features primitive campsites, a boat ramp, and fishing access along the New River at the mouth of Wolf Creek. It boasts approximately a quarter of a mile of frontage along New River and 500 feet along Wolf Creek. Small Mouth Bass are the predominant sports fish caught along the shore. There is an 18-hole disc golf course on the property. As Camp Success is a primitive campground, only tent camping is allowed.
- Annex : Formerly the old Narrows High School, the property has been converted into a community center and comprehensive recreation center. The center features an auditorium, a full court gymnasium, dance/aerobic workout room mirrors, and numerous activity rooms.
- Narrows Duck Pond & Mill Dam: Located adjacent to Wolf Creek and Monroe Street on the edge of downtown Narrows, this two-acre site is often visited by geese and ducks. Several benches and a gazebo offer a place for enjoying the scenery or fishing. Mill Dam is regarded as one of the most aesthetically appealing and valued assets of Narrows. It signifies the indomitable spirit and strength of the community. The dam was originally built before the Civil War to provide power for a flour mill. The Dam fell into a state of disrepair in 1930 and the Kingrea brothers purchased the land and restored the mill to its original design. Unfortunately, the mill deteriorated with the passage of time and was eventually dismantled in the 1960s. However, in 1985, a large break occurred in the dam which led to the drainage of the pond. Recognizing its importance, a community-wide effort was undertaken in 1986 to rebuild the dam and preserve it for the enjoyment of future generations.

The Narrows Parks and Recreation Department is located on Mary Street in Narrows. The department offers a wide array of organized programs for the community on a year-round basis. This department is also responsible for overseeing operations at the Narrows Town Park and some of the other outdoor recreation areas in town.

The department is operated by a full-time director, support staff consisting of an office assistant and event coordinators. The department is also assisted by many part time employees as well as the Parks and Recreation Commission, which consists of citizens who volunteer their time to provide program oversight and recommendations.

The recreation program consists primarily of leagues and teams that stress the fundamentals of each sport or activity while also stressing sportsmanship and teamwork. Activities are primarily held at the “Annex”.

Outdoor recreational facilities include one ball field, the Narrows High School football field (Ragsdale Field) through an agreement with the Giles County School Board, a practice ball field, and the Narrows Town Park. Ragsdale Field offers a lighted field ideal for use in soccer, football, and other sporting events.

In reviewing all the recreational opportunities in the Town of Narrows it is important to increase efforts to promote the Town as a destination for its natural beauty, hiking, biking, fishing and other water activities. There is a need to improve the connection of downtown and other parts of the town to the natural and recreational resources. The Town could improve the tourist experience by improving their wayfinding systems. Community feedback suggests a lack of youth and senior entertainment activities. In addition, maintenance of its existing park and recreation facilities is key in keeping with the Town’s positive image.

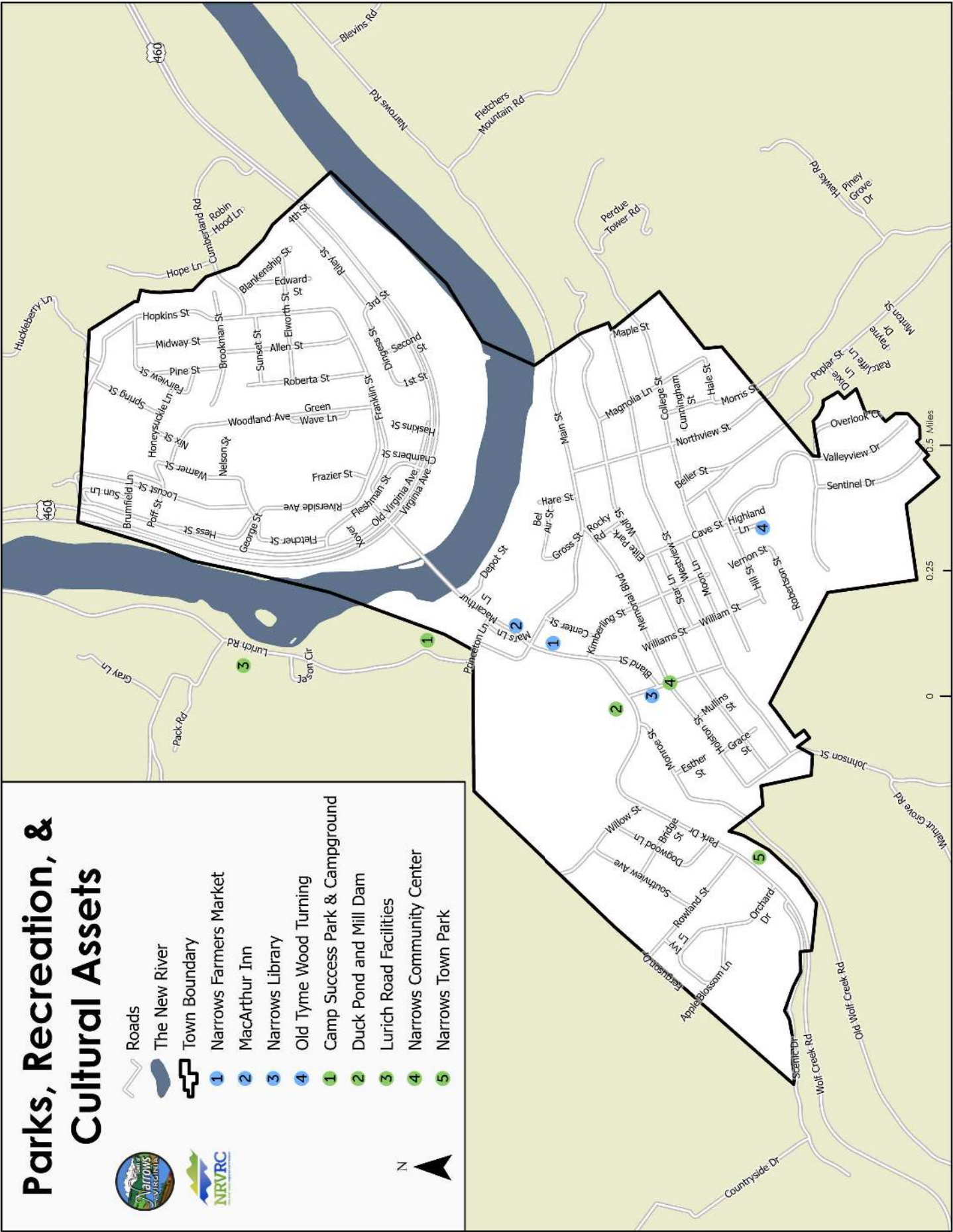
Community Engagement QUOTES:

“We need a local diner that attracts the town residents and focuses on community, Green Wave spirit, Christmas in Narrows, the Fourth of July, all the things that makes Narrows a great place to live. There are tons of natural resources in our community and a lot of talent. Let’s use the rec center for more than just the youth, teach classes in the rec center for adults (arts and craft classes, basic computer classes, using a cell phone, etc.). ”

“I think this area is unrivaled for its natural beauty but we need to make surrounding areas aware of what we have to offer. Advertise festivals, invite local wineries to come have an event here, actually have something going on in The Market on Saturdays.....”

“There isn’t much for our two largest groups--teenagers and the elderly. We need entertainment options for our youth and businesses catering to our elders.”

Map 8.1 Parks, Recreation & Cultural Amenities



GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES

Natural, Historic, Cultural + Recreational Resources Element

GOAL 1: Protect and enhance the Town’s natural, cultural, historic, and recreational assets.

Objective 1.1: Protect the natural resources to allow current and future residents to enjoy a safe environment.

Policy 1.1.1: Protect the views and scenic beauty of the Town.

Policy 1.1.2: Provide adequate measures to protect open spaces.

Policy 1.1.3: Protect the Town from natural hazards and increase resilience by adopting measures that will mitigate risk and impacts.

Policy 1.1.4: Explore options for maintaining and dredging the Duck Pond to retain its aesthetic value, prevent algae problems and support wildlife.

Policy 1.1.5: Continue to maintain air quality standards in the Town.

Policy 1.1.6: Protect the New River from water quality degradation.

Policy 1.1.7: Promote water and energy conservation.

Objective 1.2: Preserve historic and cultural resources for continuity and maintain the community’s heritage.

Policy 1.2.1: Partner with historic society, residents, and other agencies to identify cultural and historic assets.

Policy 1.2.2: Encourage preservation and reuse of historic buildings.

Policy 1.2.3: Encourage the partnership of public and private entities in promoting and preserving cultural and historical assets.

Policy 1.2.4: Increase awareness of area history (e.g., Native American; Civil War; railroad) and historic points of interest.

Policy 1.2.5: Improve pedestrian facilities and streetscape, and identify public spaces for public gathering and cultural events to promote community identity and make the town a vibrant place.

Policy 1.2.6: Promote arts and cultural events.

Policy 1.2.7: Help increase awareness of the benefits of Narrows Commercial Historic District and tax credits to incentive revitalizing historic structures.

Objective 1.3: Improve and increase recreation opportunities.

Policy 1.3.1: Promote Narrows as an outdoor activity destination.

Policy 1.3.2: Continue to maintain public open spaces such as parks, trails and campgrounds for recreational opportunities.

Policy 1.3.3: Continue to explore feasibility of constructing a whitewater park.

Policy 1.3.4: Expand access to parks and trails by improving walkability in the Town.

Policy 1.3.5: Promote collaboration among recreation businesses to attract tourism.

Policy 1.3.6: Identify and assess opportunities to better utilize space in the Narrows Community Center.

Policy 1.3.7: Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and utilize the recommendations to help plan future parks, trails, campgrounds and other recreational facilities improvements. Encourage programming and partnership with public and private entities to better serve the community.

Policy 1.3.8: Promote local artists and artisans.

Policy 1.3.9: Partner with the County in marketing and communication campaigns.

Policy 1.3.10: Consider promoting Narrows as a biking destination by providing bicycle lanes and bike parking facilities to make the Town enjoyable to ride around.

Policy 1.3.11: Develop wayfinding signage plan to help navigate vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists to recreation destinations in Town.

Policy 1.3.12: Improve River access from downtown to provide convenient connections to businesses and other amenities.